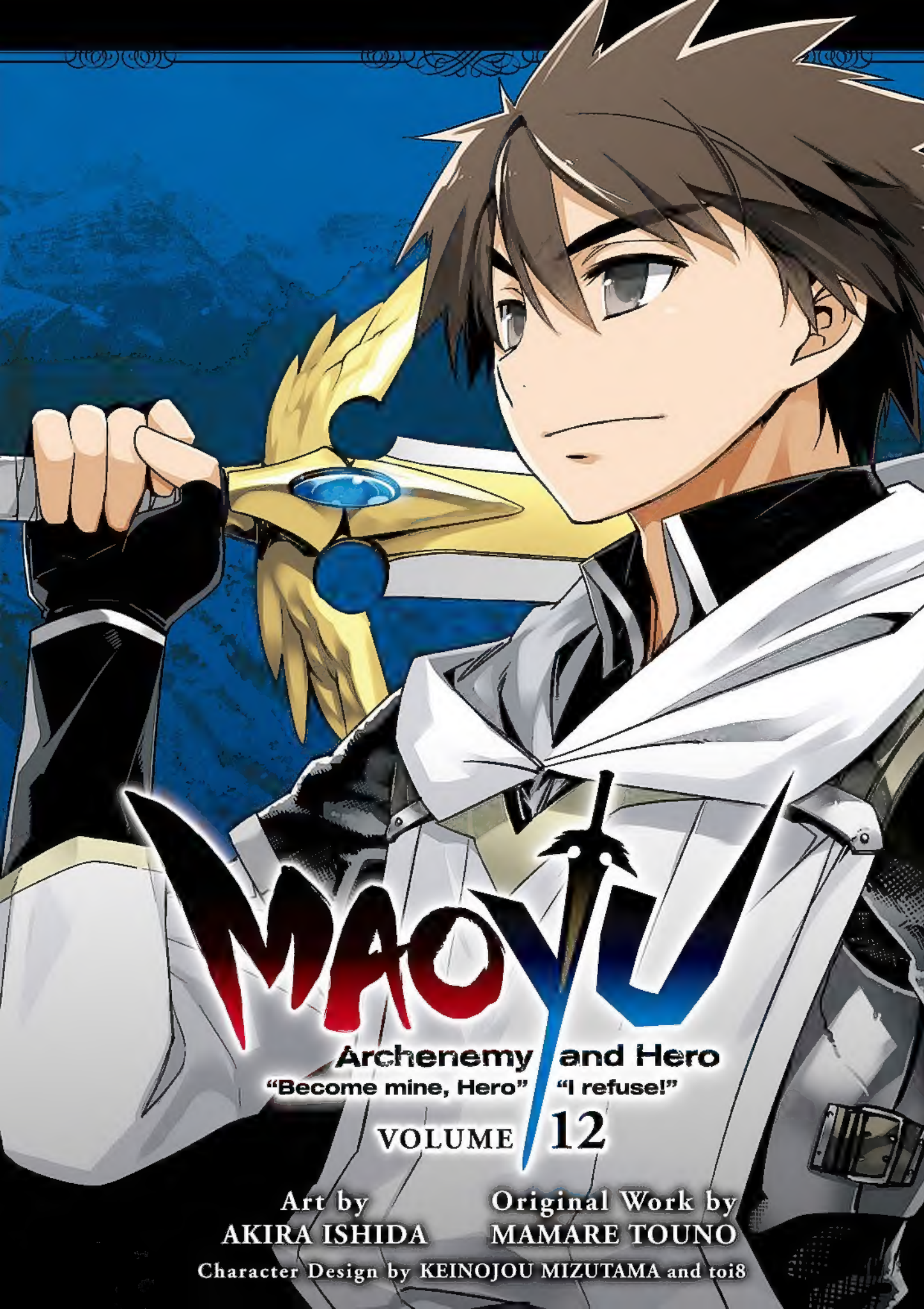
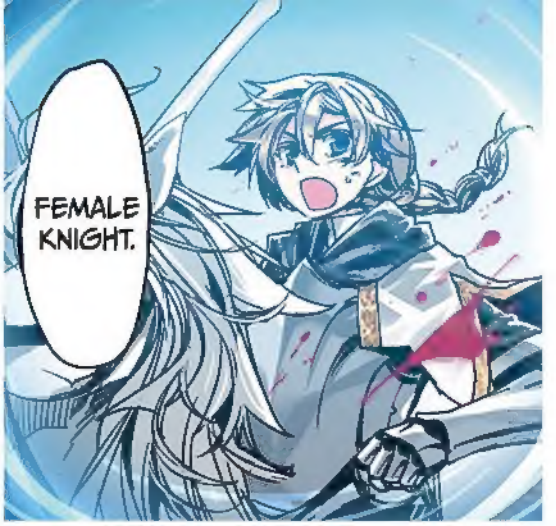
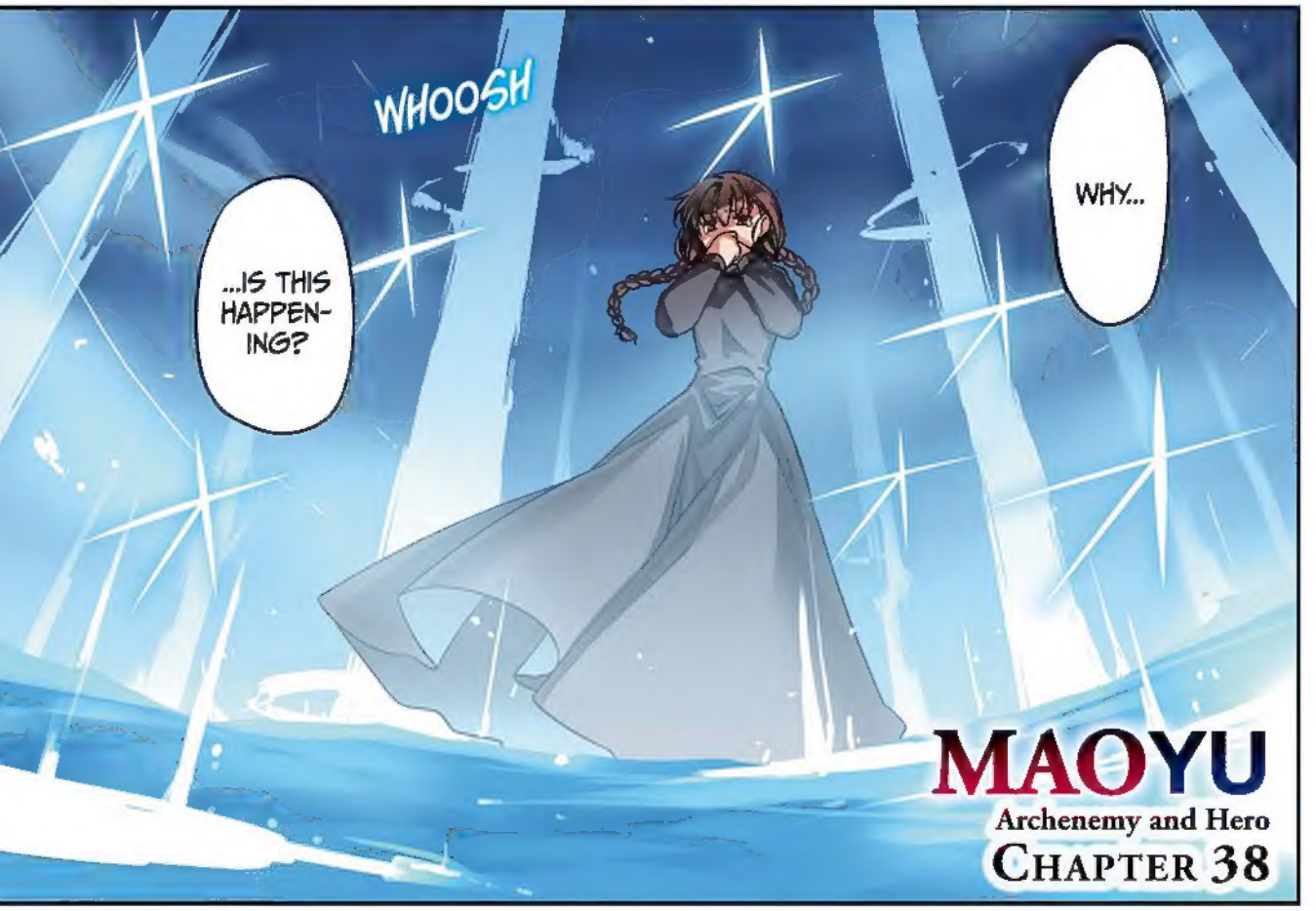
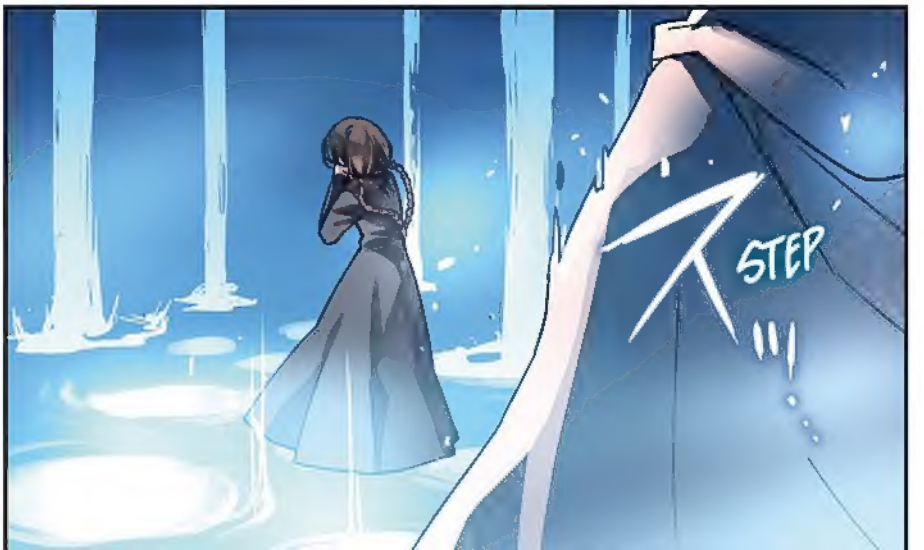

MAOYU
Archenemy and Hero
"Become mine, Hero" "I refuse!"
VOLUME 12
Art by
AKIRA ISHIDA
Original Work by
MAMARE TOUNO
Character Design by KEINOJOU MIZUTAMA and toi8

HERO.


FEMALE KNIGHT.


WHOOSH
...IS THIS HAPPEN-ING?
WHY...
MAOYU
Archenemy and Hero
CHAPTER 38

YOU ARE...


STEP

Archenemy and Hero CHAPTER 38

Guns... They're Muskets

MAOYU

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"Become mine, Hero" "I refuse!"

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MAOYU

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CHAPTER 38 Archenemy and Hero 001

Guns...They're Muskets

CHAPTER 39 Archenemy and Hero 045

Save Them Your Own Way

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We Can't Lose

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Akira Ishida's Short Story Level Hero!

MAOYU

Archenemy and Hero

"Become mine, Hero" "I refuse!"

VOLUME 12

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COLUMN PAGE
Daisuke Takenouchi (Recca-sha)
Masataka Nomura

Queen excluding the Seal King of the Blue Demons who plotted against her.

Later the Demon Queen confers her authority to the grand conference and returns to her mansion on the surface to recuperate. While enjoying a rare moment of relaxation, the Demon Queen sends off the Older Maid Sister on a journey to find her own destiny.

However, the Seal King uses the opening to invade the surface world. He conquers the Midnight Sun Kingdom in the blink of an eye and moves his army toward the Iron Kingdom.

Seeing this as an opportunity, the Hero visits the Winter Kingdom with the Fairy Queen for a

meeting with the Lonely Winter King, Iron Fist King, and Blizzard Queen. Leaving the future of humans and demons in their hands, he leaves for the battlefield to stop the Seal King. However, the Archbishop and Royal Prince Marshal's Third Holy Key Expeditionary Force appears on the battlefield. The bullets fired from countless muskets pierce the bodies of the Hero and Seal King immobilized by magic.

It has been three years since the dramatic meeting of the Demon Queen and Hero. Through their efforts that began in the Human World's Overwinter Village, the world is changing little by little. In the Southern Kingdoms of the Winter, Iron, and Ice Kingdoms, the lives of the people improve considerably, and the three kingdoms form the Three Kingdom Trade Alliance.

Once the Trade Alliance establishes their economic and spiritual independence from the Holy Kingdom and Central Church of Holy Light, several nations including the Red Horse Kingdom show signs of joining the Three Kingdom Alliance.

As the situation begins to change, the Merchant's Alliance, the Human World's largest economic organization, begins to move. Largely influenced by his encounters with the Hero and Demon Queen, the Young Merchant, leader of the Alliance, causes a new blind to blow through the economic world previously under the thumb of the Holy Kingdom and Church of Holy Light. Additionally, after an encounter with Princess Fire Dragon, he negotiates a trade agreement with Archduke Fire Dragon regarding salt. The Young Merchant uses Princess Fire Dragon to suggest a plan to construct major roads through the subterranean world, and he expands his range of activity into the Spirit World.

While advancing reforms on the surface world, the Demon Queen returns to the Spirit World to hold a Kurultai, a major conference of demons. She gathers the chiefs of the Eight Major Demon Clans and asks them to agree to cease hostilities against the humans. During the conference, the Demon Queen is gravely wounded when she is shot by an assassin, but ultimately the chiefs unite under the Demon

SHE HAS ONLY ENCOUNTERED WITH HER A SINGLE WEAK, LOOKING LADY IN WAITING.
SHE HAS COME UNARMED TO EARN OUR TRUST.
HER STATUS IN THE SPIRIT WORLD IS EQUIVALENT TO ROYALTY IN OURS.
EVEN ROYALTY OF OPPOSING NATIONS MUST BE TREATED LIKE ROYALTY.

SUMMARY OF MAOYU VOLUME 11

Lectures on Archenemy and Hero
Outline of volume.11

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A young man working with the Demon Queen. Though he called himself the Black Knight, agent of the Demon Queen, in the Spirit World, he revealed his identity to the clan chiefs after the assassination attempt on the Demon Queen. During his battle against the Seal King of the Blue Demons, he is attacked by the Holy Key Expeditionary Force.

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One of the Hero's former traveling companions. Though she is aware of the Demon Queen's true identity, she remains a sympathetic supporter. Currently she commands the armies of the Southern Kingdoms against the Blue Demon army.

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Chief of the Blue Demon Clan.

THE OGRE CALL PRIESTESS

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THE LONELY WINTER KING

The young king of the Winter Kingdom Along with the Iron and Ice Kingdoms, he establishes his independence from the Central Continent. He decides to establish the Southern Confederation.

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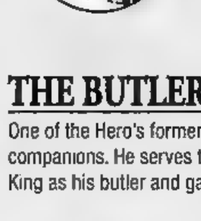
Chief of the Humanoid Demon Clan.

ARCHDUKE FIRE DRAGON

Chief of the Dragon Clan



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One of the Hero's former traveling companions. He serves the Lonely Winter King as his butler and gathers information.

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Chief of the Mechanical Clan.

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A Forest Song Clan girl who received the teachings of the Crimson Scholar. She travels with the Older Maid Sister who she encountered on her journey

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DUKE SILVER TIGER

Chief of the Fanged Demon Clan

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An Ogre Call boy who received the teachings of the Crimson Scholar. He is currently constructing a bridge across the Giant Cave

THE DEMON QUEEN

Using the knowledge she gained from the Outer Library, the queen of demons seeks to reform the world. She has recovered completely from the assassin's attack, and she appears on the battlefield with the Fanged Demons in tow to stop the Blue Demons who invaded the surface world

THE CHIEF MAID

Has been caring for the Demon Queen since she was a child. She desires happiness for the Demon Queen and works to make the Demon Queen's dream come true.

THE YOUNGER MAID SISTER

A maid working in the Demon Queen's mansion. Her gluttony opens her eyes to the world of cooking. Currently she is training in the Iron Kingdom.

THE OLDER MAID SISTER

A girl who previously worked in the Demon Queen's mansion. She leaves on a journey to search for "what she must do," and is currently pursuing the legend of the holy spirits.

THE ROYAL PRINCE MARSHAL

Younger brother of the Holy Kingdom's king and powerful hero of the Human World. He leads the Third Holy Key Expeditionary Force.

THE COMMANDER OF THE EASTERN FORTRESS

Former captain of the Holy Key Expeditionary Force. Serving as the chief of the Gateway Clan composed of the residents of Gateway City, he joins the conference of demons.

THE LILY KNIGHT CAPTAIN

Captain of the Lily Knights who serve the Archbishop. She pledges her loyalty to the teachings of the Church of Holy Light and the Archbishop.

THE ARCHBISHOP

Leader of the Church of Holy Light that worships the spirits of light. He dispatches the Third Holy Key Expeditionary Force to acquire the holy relic.

PRINCESS FIRE DRAGON

Daughter of Archduke Fire Dragon. She represents Gateway City and oversees the construction of roads in the subterranean world.

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ROAR
DID WE GET THEM?
THEY FELL!
OOH
おお
OOH
お
WHAT WAS THE SPELL THAT STOPPED THE DEMON'S MOVEMENTS?
THE PRAYER OF 250 HIGH-RANKING PRIESTS.
NO DEMON CAN ESCAPE ITS STRENGTH.

ARGH ...
HISSS
AAARGH
RAGAGH
IT FEELS AS THOUGH THE LEAD BALLS ARE BURNING..
WHAT IS THIS?
MY WOUNDS WILL NOT CLOSE.

LEAD BALLS.
COULD THIS BE WHAT THE DEMON QUEEN WAS TALKING ABOUT?
URGH
THEY PIERCED THE BLACK KNIGHT'S ARMOR.
ARE THEY STRENGTH-ENED WITH MAGIC?
COUGH
IN ANY CASE, I NEED TO TREAT MYSELF.
?!
VANISH
GLOW
!

!!
DE-
MONS!
DIE!
WHAT'S
HAP-
PEN-
ING?
I
CAN'T
CAST
MY
SPELL.

ENE-
MIES
OF
HUMAN-
KIND!
!!
DE-
MONS!
DIE!

THAT
IS SUF-
FICIENT
...
...TO
MAKE
THEM
LOSE
THEIR
STRENGTH.
SURROUND
THEM WITH
CURSES
AND
ABUSE.
THEY
MUST BE
RIDICULED
AND RE-
JECTED.

LET NOTH-ING STOP YOU...
...FROM KILLING THEM.
AS YOU WISH.

!!!
RUSTLE
IF THE SPIRITS WILL IT...
...WE WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO KILL THEM.

....
CHIRP
WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHO ARE THEY?
わあああ
AAAH
ドォォォン
BOOM

CAVALRY-MEN, MOUNT YOUR HORSES!
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
LORD PRO-TEC-TOR?
BOOM
SNORT
LIEU-TEN-ANT!
I'M LEAVING YOU IN COMMAND OF THIS INFANTRY UNIT!
DEFEND THIS LOCATION WITH YOUR LIVES!
BOOM

IT'S NOT A QUES-TION OF NUMBERS.
BOOM
BOOM
WE REQUIRE YOUR PROTEC-TION!
ONLY A HUNDRED KNIGHTS ARE POSITIONED HERE!

LORD PRO-TEC-TOR!
FOLLOW ME, CAVALRY-MEN!
WE'LL STRIKE AT THE ENEMIES BEHIND US!
RUMBLE

BOOM
BOOM
CLIP CLOP
CLIP CLOP
THESE ARE THE WEAPONS THE CRIMSON SCHOLAR MENTIONED.
THEY'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE IN USE, THOUGH.
CLANG

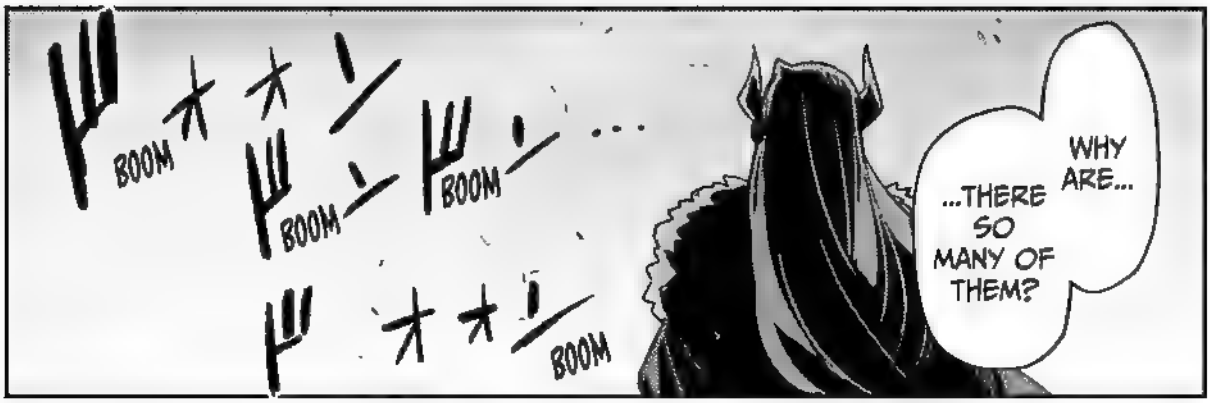
BOOM
BOOM

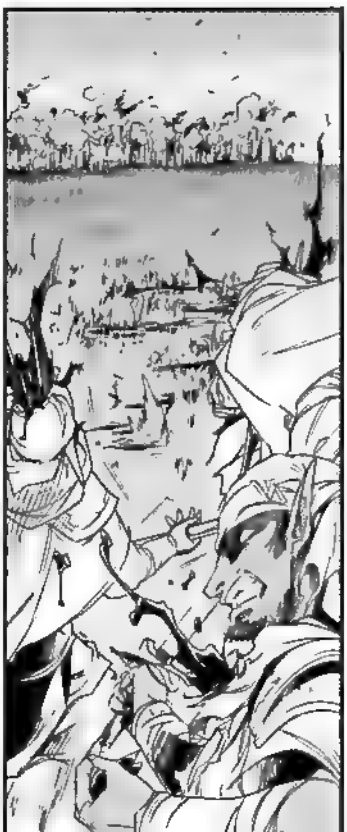
BOOM
THERE'S SO MUCH SMOKE.
WHAT ARE THOSE WEAPONS?
BOOM

BOOM
WHAT IS THAT COMPANY DOING?
THEY'RE ATTACKING THE BLUE DEMONS, THE FANGED DEMONS, AND THE SOUTHERN ARMY!
BOOM

IT'S A RANGED WEAPON THAT USES BLACK POWDER TO FIRE LEAD BALLS.
I HAD AN IRON KINGDOM ENGINEER BUILD A PROTO-TYPE...
...BUT IT WAS NEVER PUT INTO USE.

GUNS.
THEY'RE MUS-KETS.


BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
...THERE SO MANY OF THEM?
WHY ARE...



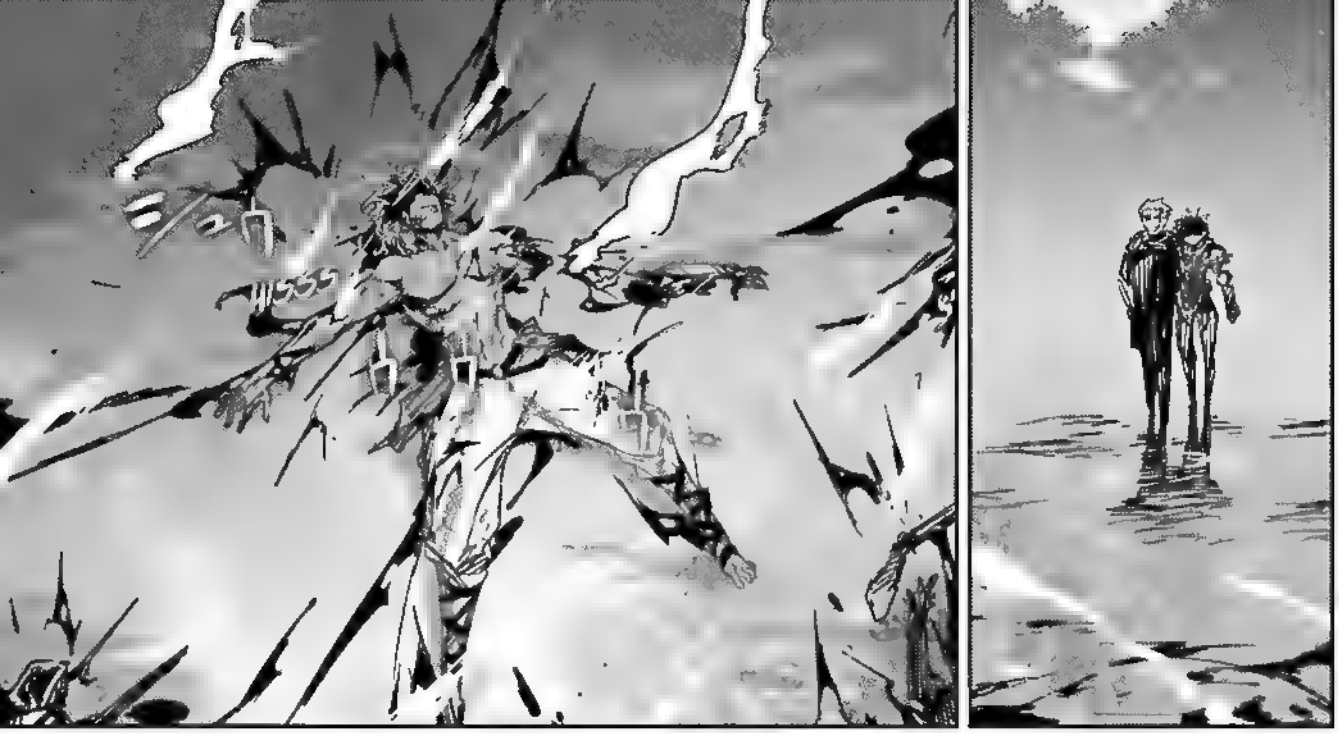
THERE!
RUSTLE
BOOM
THERE ARE TOO MANY.
THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY.
BOOM
IT DOESN'T MATTER!
FIRE!
MURMUR
NO, THEY'RE DEMONS.
HUMANS?
MURMUR
!!
STEP
STEP
KA-KLICK
KA-KLICK

DUKE SILVER TIGER!
FWOOSH

DUKE SILVER TIGER SWORE...
...NOT TO DIE UNTIL HE HAD SAVED THE DEMON QUEEN'S LIFE THREE TIMES!
HA HA HA
COUGH
YOU'RE BLEEDING SO MUCH.
YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!
OR NOT.

WE SHOULD RETREAT AS SOON AS POS-SIBLE!
LET'S GO!
!
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT THOSE STRANGE TUBES ARE.
COUGH
MANY OF OUR MEN HAVE FALLEN.
WHAT ...
...ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I WAS LOOK-ING FOR THE BLUE DEMONS.
にょほほ AHA HA HA
OH.
YOU'RE AWAKE.
OLD MAN!
...

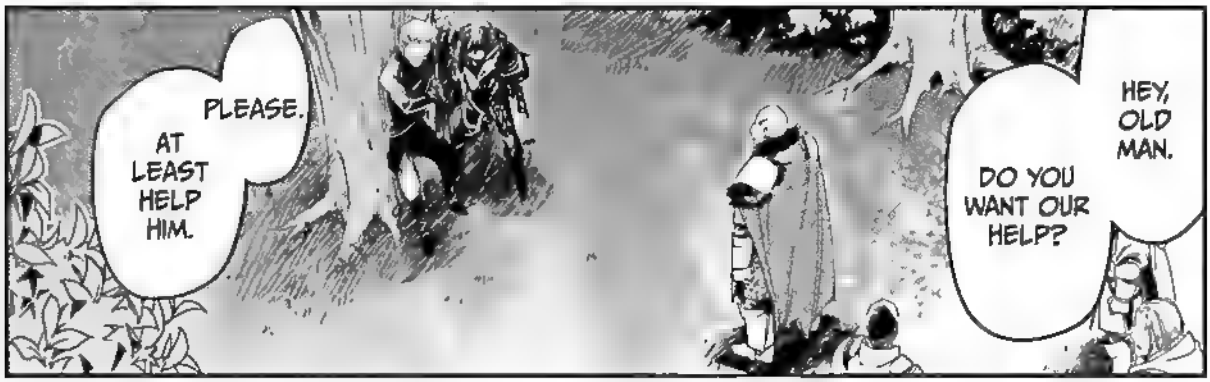
OLD MAN.
YOU'RE HURT!
IT'S NOT SERIOUS.
IT'S DIFFICULT TO PERCEIVE THE MURDEROUS INTENT OF *THOSE* WEAPONS.
COUGH
GIVE ME A MINUTE. I'LL HEAL YOU.
DAMN IT.
MY MAGIC STILL DOESN'T WORK.
JUST BECAUSE OF THESE WOUNDS.
HERO, YOU...
...MUST NOT ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE STRUCK BY THOSE BULLETS.
YOU MUST NOT BE AFFECTED ...
...BY THEIR MALICE OR PRAYERS, EITHER.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.



DAMN ...
...HU-MANS.
DAMN ...
...YOU.

RUSTLE
RUSTLE
I WAS WAITING...
...FOR AN OP-PORTU-NITY TO ASSAS-SINATE HIM...
...BUT I NEVER GOT THE CHANCE.

DON'T GLARE AT ME.
WE WERE WATCHING YOU FIGHT FROM THE GROUND.
IS THIS THE GUY WHO WAS FIGHTING IN THE SKY?
SERI-OUSLY?
WHISTLE
OOH
HA HA HA
HE'S FULL OF HOLES.


HEY, OLD MAN.
DO YOU WANT OUR HELP?
PLEASE. AT LEAST HELP HIM.

OLD MAN.
CAN WE KILL THIS ONE?
OF COURSE.

HEY.
THROW SOME LIQUOR ON HIM AND BANDAGE HIM UP.
YES! SIR!
OW!

SPLISH
SPLURCH
TWITCH
YOU WILL PAY.
YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS.
DAMN ...
...YOU ...
...HU-MAN
I DON'T KNOW...
...WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
LEARN YOUR PLACE ...
...HU-MAN.
SLASH

THEY SEEM TO BE AFFILIATED WITH THE CENTRAL CHURCH AND NOBLES.

CAPTAIN.
THE GUYS CARRYING THOSE STRANGE TUBES AND THE HEAVY INFANTRY...
...ARE SPREADING OUT AND ENTERING THE FOREST.

?
WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?

HEY, BROTH-ER.
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN THANKED FOR SAVING SOMEONE?

I SEE.
HOW MANY TIMES ?
JUST ANSWER THE QUESTION.
I DON'T REMEM-BER.
A LOT OF TIMES.
YES.

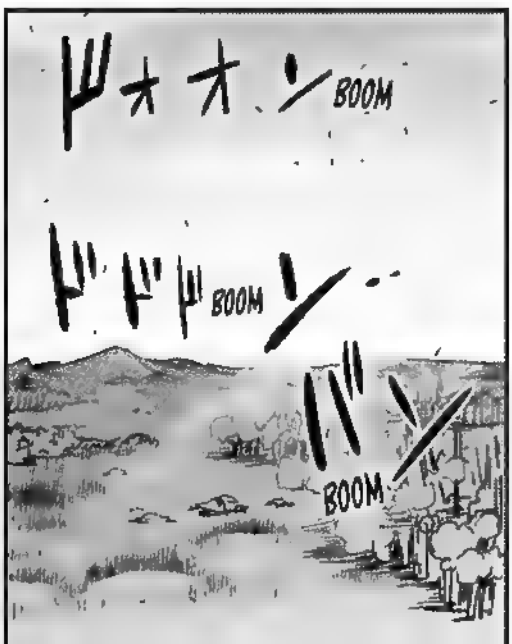
?
I GUESS I'M NOT...
...JEAL-OUS.
JUST ONCE IS MORE THAN ENOUGH.
...!
YES, BOSS.
TAKE THEM TO THE PRETEN-TIOUS GUY.
GOT IT?
HEY.
YES! SIR!
GET THE OLD MAN AND THIS GUY ON HORSES.
LET'S GO...
...IDIOTS!
おおおお
ROAR
CHEER
おお
ALL RIGHT!
ALL RIGHT, BOYS!
LET'S CHARGE INTO THOSE NOBLES AND CHURN THINGS UP!

OUR BOSS IS A HERO.
A REAL HERO.
HE SAVED ME WHEN I WAS AN ORPHAN.

SQUEEZE
THEY'RE GOING TO DIE.
HEY.
STOP THEM.
SHUT UP!
SQUEEZE
STRAIN

GREAT MEN...
...GET TO CHOOSE WHERE THEY DIE.

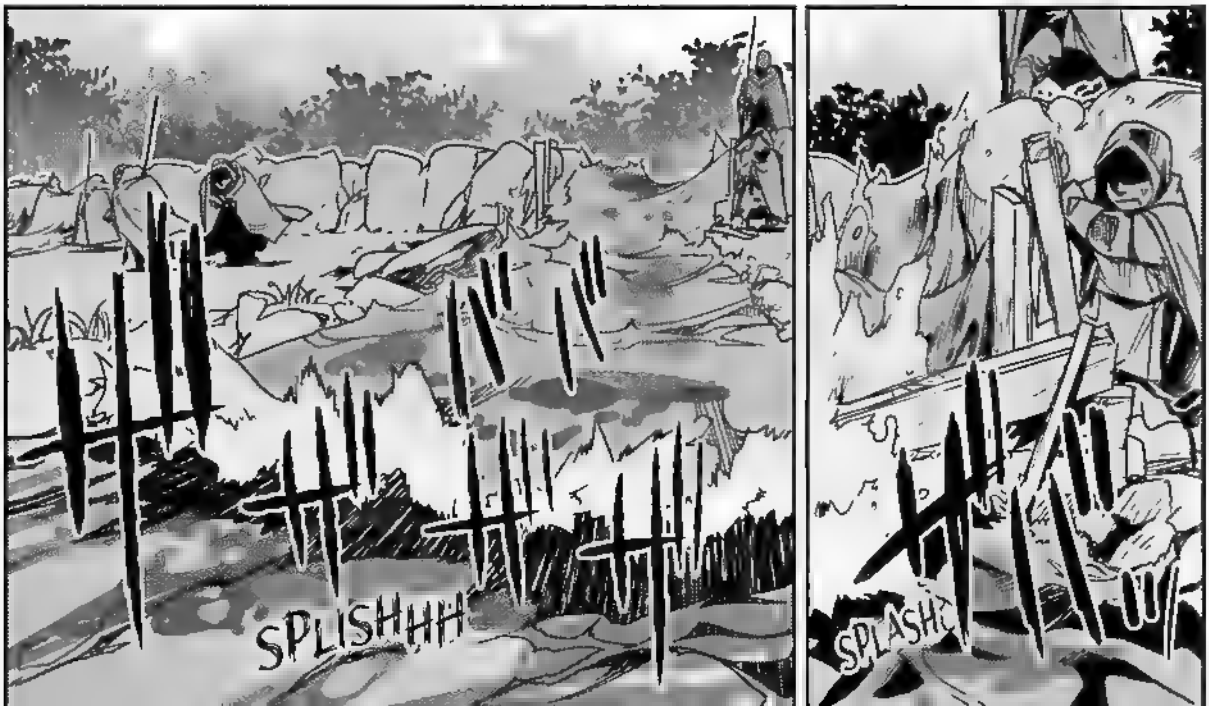
THEY'RE INVISIBLE SPEARS!
WE'RE BEING STRUCK BY INVISIBLE SPEARS!
BOOM
SOME-THING'S HITTING US!
AAARGH!
WHUD
WHUD
WHUD


BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

THEY'RE ARMED WITH UNKNOWN WEAPONS AND ATTACKING EVERYONE...
...REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY'RE DEMONS OR HUMANS!
BOOM
KNIGHT GENERAL!
THEY'RE SOLDIERS OF THE CHURCH OF HOLY LIGHT!
TENS OF THOUSANDS?
THERE ARE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF THEM!
THIS ISN'T WHAT WE EXPECTED, BUT WE'LL PROCEED AS PLANNED!
HAVE THE FRONT LINE FALL BACK!
!!
YES, MA'AM!
BOOM
BOOM
RUSTLE
RUMBLE
ROAR
RAISE THREE SMOKE SIGNALS!
YES, SIR!

I GUESS WE'LL BE USING IT...
...AGAINST BOTH THE BLUE DEMONS AND THE CHURCH.

YES, SIR!
OPEN THE SLUICES AND RELEASE THE WATER!
GOT IT!
I SEE THREE COLORED SMOKE SIGNALS!


SPLISHHH
SPLASH

WE'VE FULFILLED OUR DUTY.
LORD PROTECTOR...
...AND KNIGHT GENERAL.
ARE THEY MIXING WELL?
YES, SIR.
IT'S FLOATING ON THE SURFACE.

I PRAY FOR YOUR SAFETY.

BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

YES, SIR!
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
ORDER A TEMPORARY RETREAT!
WE'LL REORGANIZE OUR FORMATION IN THE REAR!

DAMN HUMANS!
THE HOLY KINGDOM AND CHURCH OF HOLY LIGHT...
...BROKE OUR AGREEMENT.

SPLURCH

BOOM
RUMBLE
THE WATER LEVEL IS RISING?
SPLISHHH

BOOM
WHAT?
SPLISHHH

BOOM
BOOM
RUMBLE
BOOM
YAAAH
YAAAH
YAAAH

WHOOSH

BURN

THERE'S SOMETHING FLOATING IN THE WATER.
IT'S BLACK...
...OIL?
SPLISHHH

ROAR

BOOM

BANG

BANG

ROAR

HHNNY!

FWOOSH

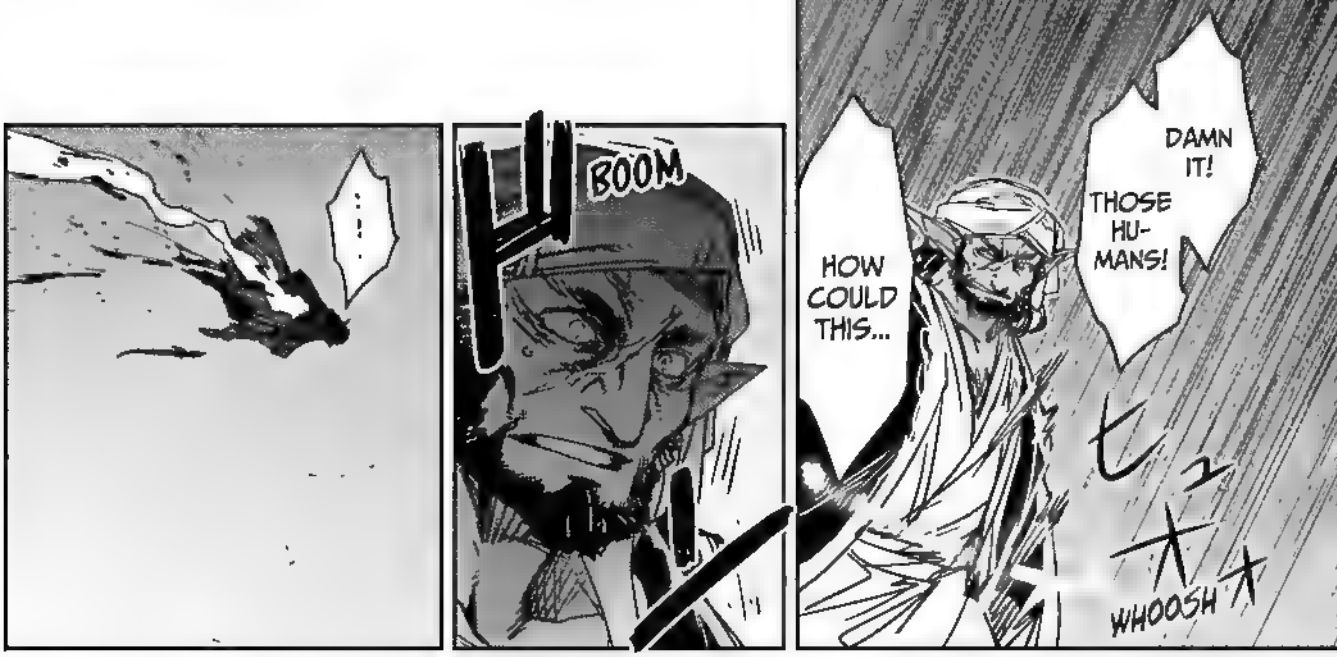
ROAR

ROAR
BOOM
BANG
BANG
WHINNY
FWOOSH

THE BLUE DEMON FORCES WERE SPREAD ACROSS A BROAD AREA...
...BUT I WASN'T EXPECTING THAT TO HELP US ESCAPE.
IT'S A LABYRINTH OF FIRE RUNNING THROUGH THE WATER-WAYS WE DESIGNED.
ROAR

THIS WILL ONLY ALLOW US TO DEFEAT THEIR ADVANCE GROUP.
NO.
THE CHURCH'S MAIN FORCE IS PROBABLY STILL FARTHER BEHIND.
DOES THIS MEAN OUR ARMY...
...HAS WON?

HURRY!
HELP THE WOUNDED!
YES, MA'AM!
HOW-EVER...
...IT WILL BUY US ENOUGH TIME TO ESCAPE.
STEP
ROAR
HUMMM
FWOOSH
TSK!
ROAR
AAARGH
BURN


BOOM
HOW COULD THIS...
DAMN IT!
THOSE HU-MANS!
WHOOSH

WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THAT!
YOU IDIOT!
LOOK ...
I HIT HIM!
ALL RIGHT!
HEY.

ROAR
ROAR
BANG
BANG

I SEE.
THE THREE KING-DOMS LAID A TRAP FOR US.
ROAR
I HAVE A REPORT!
THE FLAMES COVER THE ENTIRE EASTERN SIDE OF THESE PLAINS!
IT STRETCH-ES FOR MILES IN EVERY DIREC-TION!
THE ADVANCE GROUP WILL NOT ESCAPE UN-SCATHED.
BUT HOW...?
THEY MUST HAVE DUMPED A SPECIAL OIL INTO THEIR WATERWAYS ...
...THOUGH I CAN'T SAY FOR CERTAIN EXACTLY HOW IT'S "SPECIAL."

HA.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
WE DIDN'T COME HERE TO OBLITERATE THE THREE KINGDOM TRADE ALLIANCE.

ORDER THE REMAINING FORCES TO RETREAT.
ARE YOU SURE?
CLOP

MARCH

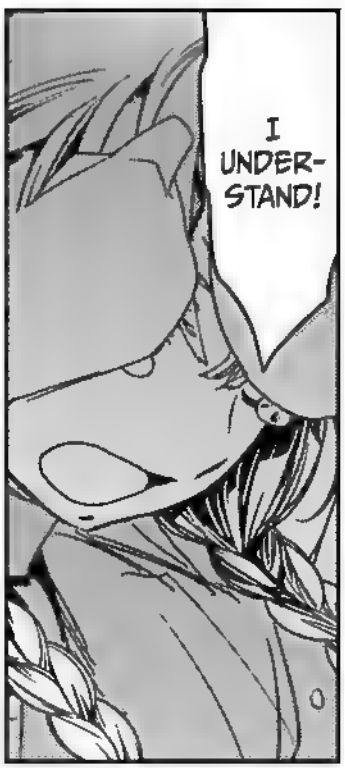
SEND OUR MAIN FORCE TO THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM.
WE MUST SECURE THE ANTARCTIC CONTINENT AND A PATH TO THE REMAINS OF THE GATE.

ROAR

I UNDER-STAND.
I UNDER-STAND.

PROG-RESS.

WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?


I UNDER-STAND!

THE END

CHAPTER 38
Guns...They're Muskets

FIGHTING IN MARSHES

Terrain is an important part of battles. Like steep mountains and deep valleys, marshes have been avoided since ancient times as a disadvantageous position for fighting.

MARSHES: REGARDED SINCE ANCIENT TIMES AS UNSUITABLE FOR BATTLE

Terrain is an important part of war. Even Sun Tzu's book of military tactics written during the 5th Century BCE in ancient China touches on terrain, suggesting its importance since ancient times.

In this work, the Female Knight drives back her enemies by igniting oil. She developed this strategy because she thoroughly investigated the terrain beforehand.

Marshes limit movement, making it difficult to handle unforeseen circumstances. They should be avoided as much as possible.

Sun Tzu describes marshes, precipitous ravines, deep quagmires, areas of dense vegetation, and steep mountains as places that should be avoided or passed through quickly. This is because they have limited escape paths or restrict vision allowing for ambushes, making them difficult places for soldiers to move through.

Additionally, when forced to fight in a marsh, you should secure a position where grass is growing and put your back to the trees. This allows you to fight on steadier footing than your opponent and retreat onto hard ground should you find yourself at a disadvantage.

The ancient Roman Emperor Decius' death in his battle against the Goths serves as an example of how difficult it is to fight in marshes.

Emperor Decius set out to subjugate the Goths and successfully defeated two out of three Goth companies. However, the final company remained stationed behind a marsh and guarded their position. The exasperated Emperor Decius entered the marsh.

However, the feet of the armored Roman soldiers got caught in the damp ground and could not advance. They expended tremendous amounts of energy simply moving from one place to another and eventually became unable to move.

The Goth army that had been patiently waiting swooped down on the Romans. Without secure footing, the Roman soldiers were unable to properly throw their javelins. The Goths struck down soldier after soldier with their long spears, and even Emperor Decius lost his life.

Marshes are also an excellent place to lay a trap for one's enemies. They are especially effective when one's allies are disadvantaged.

Additionally, peatlands require even more caution than ordinary marshes. Peats consist of built up layers of partially decomposed plants. Though they resemble mud, they are flammable, and once ignited they are difficult to extinguish. In Southeast Asia, fires in peatlands are a serious problem. Escaping from a peatland fire fueled by oil is impossible.

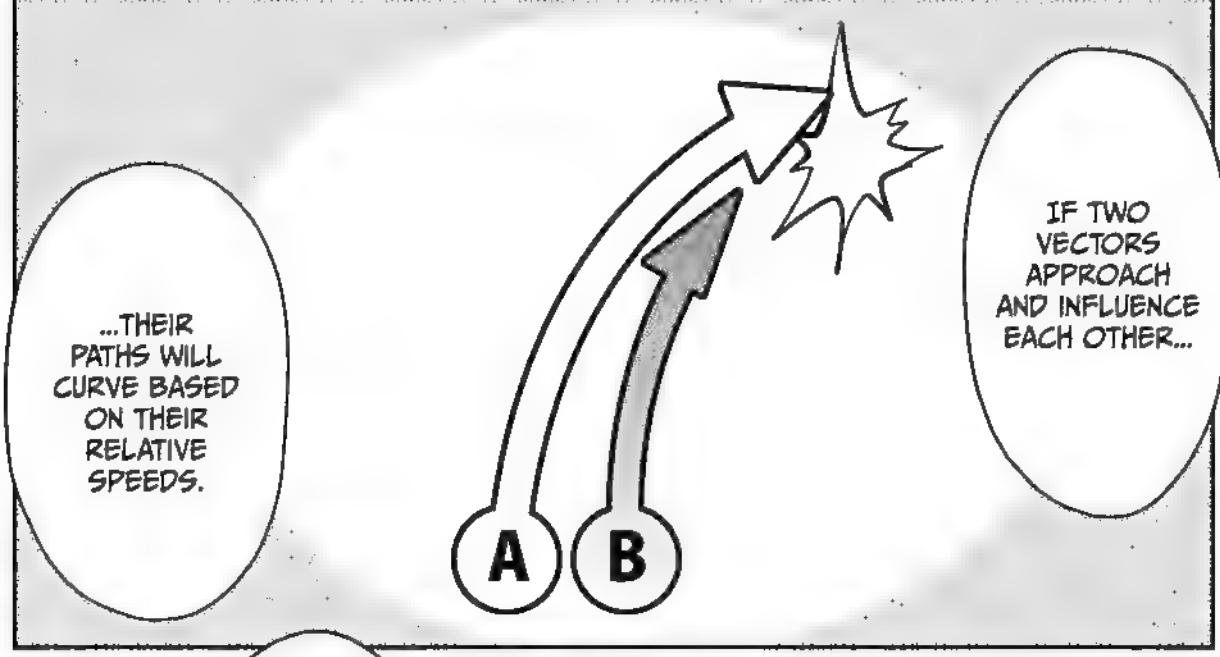
AN ENDLESS DREAM

ROAR

ROAR

ROAR
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPEN-ING.
THIS...

ROAR
...ON A CONCEPTUAL LEVEL, A DIFFERENCE IN SPEED IS GENERATED.
...AND THE VECTOR QUANTITIES OF MULTIPLE LAYERS ARE DIFFERENT...
WHEN THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT BEINGS...
MAOYU
Archenemy and Hero
CHAPTER 39


IF TWO VECTORS APPROACH AND INFLUENCE EACH OTHER...
A
B
...THEIR PATHS WILL CURVE BASED ON THEIR RELATIVE SPEEDS.

THIS IS PROSAICALLY EXPRESSED AS THE TURNING OF AN ERA.

EVERY TIME AN ERA CHANGES, THE RESULTING CONFLICT DEMANDS BLOOD.
TIMES CHANGE OVER THE COURSE OF THESE BLOODY CURVES.

CHAPTER 39 Archenemy and Hero
Save Them Your Own Way

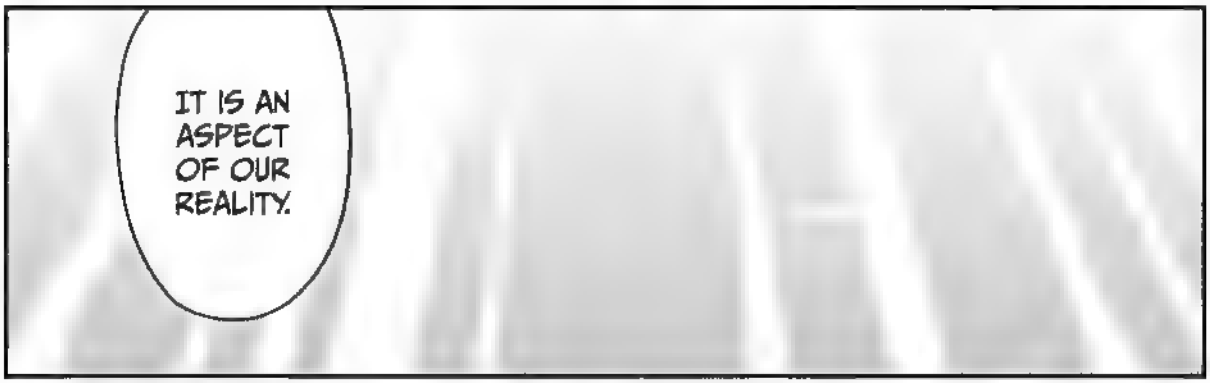
EVEN WHEN IT SEEMS AS THOUGH NO BLOOD IS SPILLED...
...YOU SIMPLY DO NOT PERCEIVE IT.
IT IS NOT THE BLOOD OF FLESH, BUT THE BLOOD OF SPIRITS AND SOULS THAT IS BEING SPILLED.
THERE ARE NO EXCEP-TIONS.

?
SOMETIMES AN INDIVIDUAL APPEARS WHO CAN GIVE MORE BLOOD THAN OTHERS.
FOR WHATEVER REASON, THESE INDIVIDUALS...
...SHED THE BLOOD OF THOUSANDS OR HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE...
...AND PAY THE PRICE OF BLOOD CHANGE DEMANDS BY THEMSELVES.
BUT...
THE TIMES AND WORLD TURN IN THIS MANNER.
BY EXERCISING THEIR "STRENGTH," THEY CONCEAL THE AMOUNT OF BLOOD DEMANDED BY THE CHANGING TIMES...
...AS THOUGH NO SACRIFICES WERE REQUIRED AT ALL.

...THOSE WHO ARE MEANT TO KILL ONE ANOTHER...
...THOSE WHOSE DEATHS ARE MEANT TO SATISFY THE ERA'S THIRST FOR BLOOD...
...ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO RESIST THE TIMES AND THE WORLD.

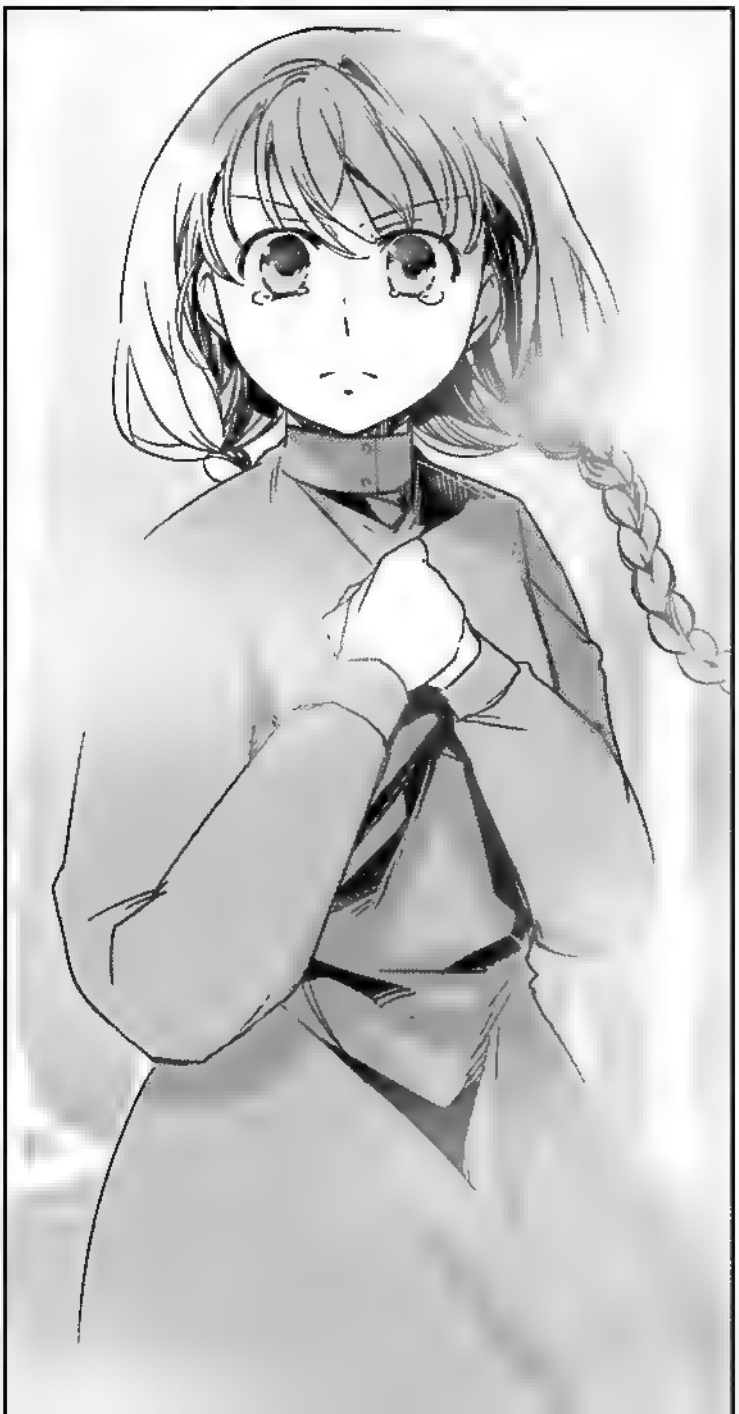
YOU MEAN...

ARE WE ALLOWING...
...THIS OCEAN OF BLOOD TO DIE...
...JUST TO LET SOME-ONE ELSE LIVE?
THIS BLOOD ...
THIS COPIOUS AMOUNT OF BLOOD ...

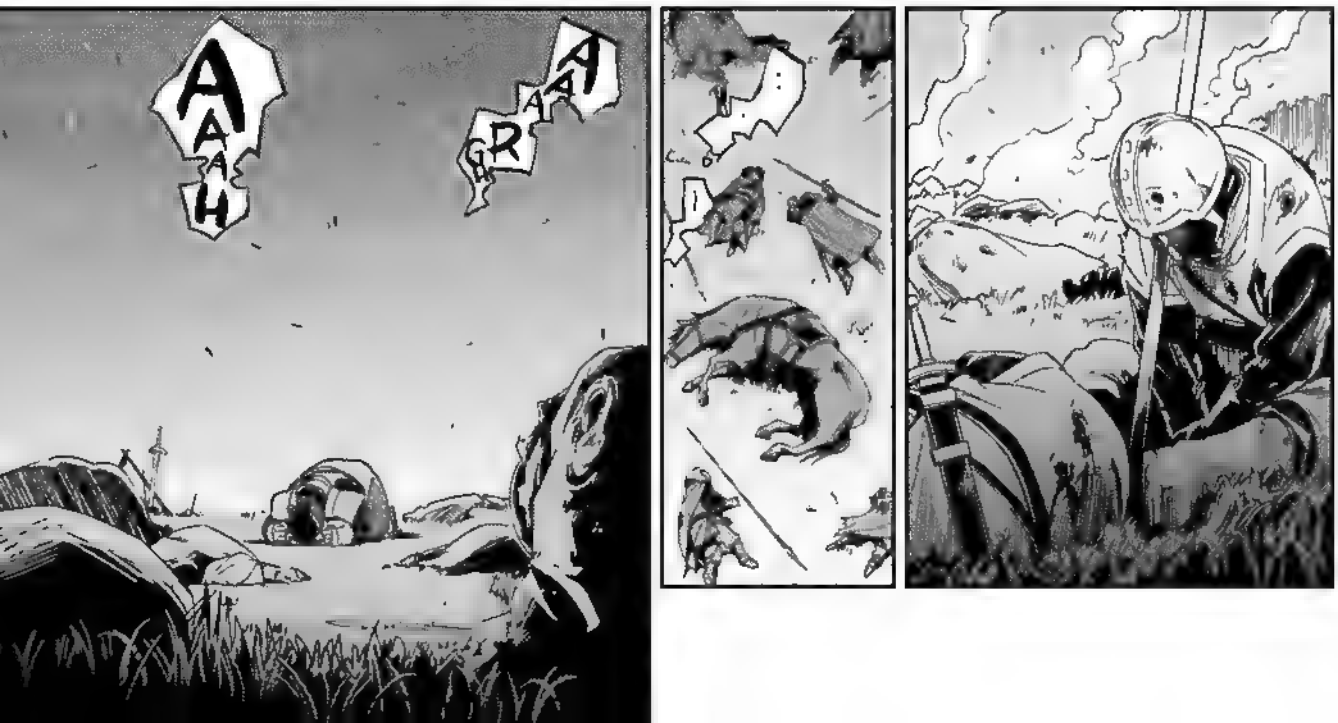

IT IS AN ASPECT OF OUR REALITY.

THE FLOW OF BLOOD IS SAVING YOU AS WELL.
YOU RIDE ON A BOAT FLOAT-ING ON A RIVER OF BLOOD.
YOU MUST NOT FORGET.
YOU ARE RIDING IN THE SAME BOAT.

EVEN SO, I...
BUT...



I WILL TAKE YOU AWAY.
THIS LIBRARY IS NOT RIGHT FOR YOU.
THEN...
...YOU SHOULD SAVE THEM YOUR OWN WAY.


AAH
GRAAA

THEY ALL DIED.
SO MANY OF THEM.
SO MANY...
...PEOPLE DIED.

AAH
AAH

THEY WILL NOT SPEAK.

THEY WILL NEVER LAUGH AGAIN.

THEY FLEW INTO THAT STORM OF BULLETS.
THEY PROTECT-ED ME...
...AND THEIR FRIENDS.

WE SPENT...
...ALL THAT TIME TO-GETHER.
THEY WERE MY FRIENDS!

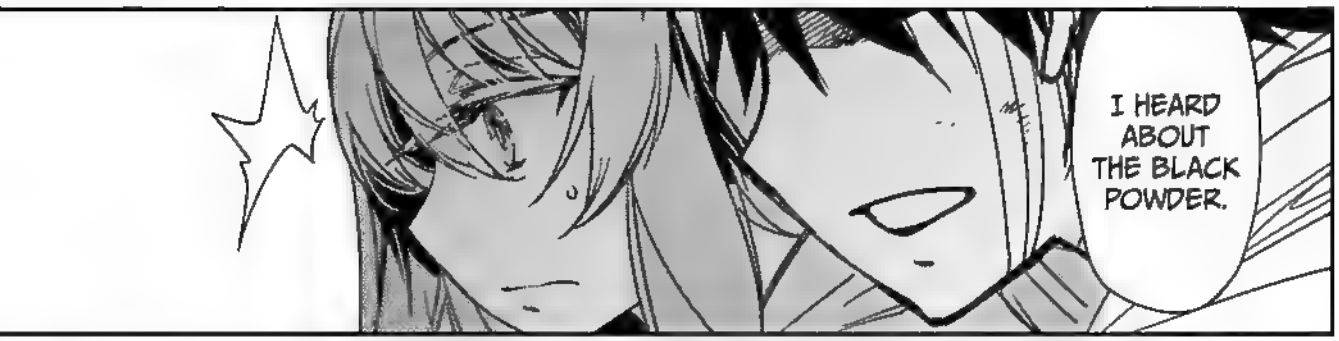
LORD PRO-TECTOR.
I FAILED TO PROTECT THEM.
I HAVEN'T PROTECTED ANYTHING.

LORD PRO-TECTOR.
LET'S GO HOME.
IN THE IRON KING-DOM...
...THERE ARE STILL MANY PEOPLE YOU MUST PROTECT.
WIPE
YES, SIR.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
STEP!

I EMBARRASSED MYSELF AS A SOLDIER.
NOT AT ALL, SIR.
LORD PROTECTOR.
LET'S WIN THE NEXT ONE.
LET'S WIN THE NEXT BATTLE AND SMILE.

DEMON QUEEN.
HERO.
I LOST.
I LOST TOO.

I DON'T GET IT.
I DON'T KNOW WHY WE LOST...
...OR WHY THEY WERE WINNING.
YEAH.


I HEARD ABOUT THE BLACK POWDER.

YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT.
THAT GAVE US A LOT OF TROUBLE.
I'M SORRY.
IT'S MY FAULT.

WHILE I WAS FIGHTING, I WONDERED...
...FOR WHAT PURPOSE WE WERE SHEDDING BLOOD.
I FAILED AS WELL.
I LOST.

THOSE SACRIFICES DIDN'T NEED TO BE MADE.
AT THE VERY LEAST, THE THOUSANDS THAT DIED TODAY...
...COULD HAVE BEEN SAVED IF I HAD BEEN...
...MORE CAREFUL.
I WONDERED IF WE WOULD ACQUIRE SOMETHING WORTH THE PRICE OF THAT BLOOD.
I WONDERED IF OUR SACRIFICES WERE IN VAIN.

STEP
WHAT IS IT?
WHAT NOW?
DEMON QUEEN.
FEMALE KNIGHT.
I HAVE SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO TELL YOU.

YOU CAN GO ANY-WHERE...
...BUT NO ONE HAS ORDERED YOU TO GO ANY-WHERE.
THE WORLD STRETCHES IN ALL DIREC-TIONS...
...BUT ALL YOU KNOW IS THE PATH YOU'RE WALKING ON NOW.
YOU WALK ACROSS A PLAIN WHILE TREADING ON LEAVES MOISTENED WITH MORN-ING DEW.
A ROSE-COLORED SUNRISE FILLS THE SKY.
HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT LIES BEYOND...
...THAT HILL?

IT MAY BE BLOOD INSTEAD OF DEW.

AS LONG AS...
...WE HAVE TO WALK, I WANT TO SEE SOMETHING I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
BUT...
...WE CAN'T STOP WALKING.

MAYBE.

IT'S EMBARRASSING TO ADMIT...
...BUT I'M NOT SURE I CAN MAKE IT ON MY OWN.
WHY DON'T YOU GO WITH ME?

HEY.
LISTEN.

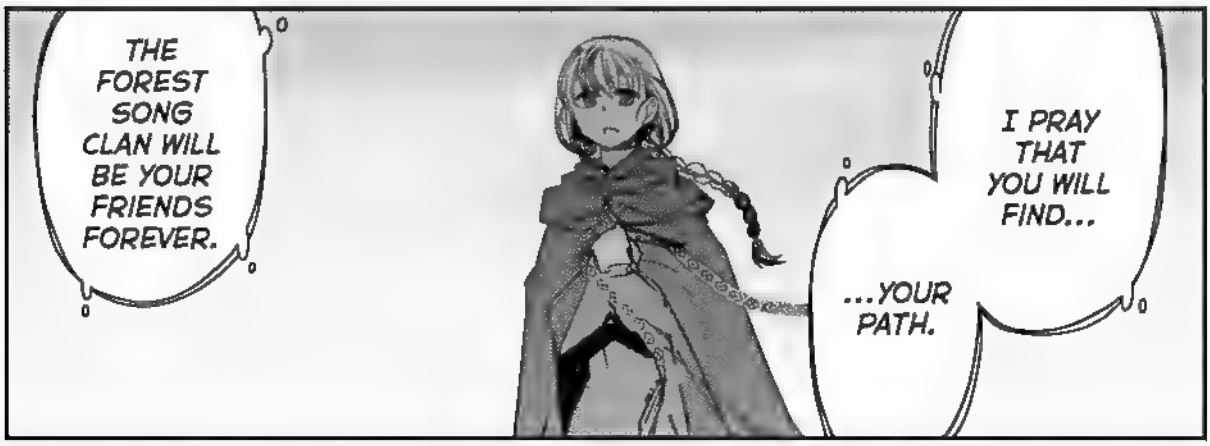
NOD
チラ…
GLANCE
WELL?
I CAN'T DO IT ALONE.
BESIDES, ONCE I'M STANDING ON TOP OF THAT HILL...
...I WANT SOMEONE TO ENJOY THE VIEW WITH ME.
VERY WELL.
RATH-ER...
...IF YOU LEAVE ME THIS TIME, YOU'LL REGRET IT.
YOU BELONG TO ME, HERO.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE ME, I'LL ABANDON YOU INSTEAD.
YOU'LL STAY AND HOLD THE FORT.

MUSICIAN, DID YOU SEE IT TOO?
YES. I SAW IT.
COUNT-LESS NUMBERS OF THEM.
AS NUMEROUS AS THE GRAINS OF SAND ON A BEACH.
DEATHS

TWITCH
SLIP
YOU'RE NOT SURPRISED.
YOU MUST HAVE KNOWN.
I BELONG TO THE FOREST SONG CLAN.
WE SING SONGS ...
...AND TELL STORIES.
WE RECORD EVERYTHING WE SEE AND HEAR.
WE ARE THE DESCENDANTS OF THE ALFAR.
YOU ARE THE MUSICIAN.
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT SAY THAT.
EVEN AFTER A MILLION YEARS, OUR CLAN NEVER FORGETS.
WE ARE DEMONS.

THE TIMES DESIRE BLOOD?
PEOPLE CANNOT BE SAVED WITHOUT SPILLING BLOOD?
I'M GOING NOW.
I HAVE CHOSEN MY PATH.
NO.
IT WAS DECIDED FROM THE BEGIN-NING.
EVEN IF THAT'S THE RULE...
...I REFUSE TO ACKNOWL-EDGE IT.
I REFUSE TO PAY WITH BLOOD.
I WILL PAY THE PRICE WITH MUSIC.

...IT WAS PROBABLY MY VOICE.
MY SONG.
MY EMOTION.
IF YOU'RE LISTENING CLOSELY...
...AND SUDDENLY LOOK UP ON A STREET CORNER SOMEWHERE...

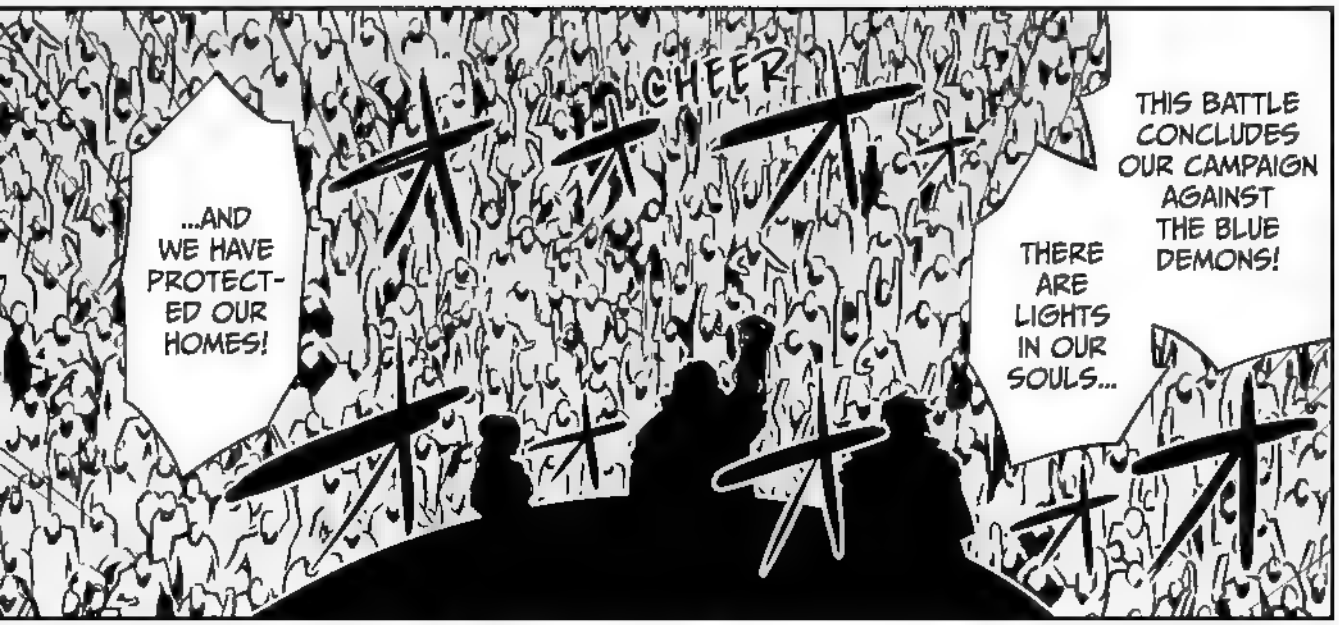

THE FOREST SONG CLAN WILL BE YOUR FRIENDS FOREVER.
I PRAY THAT YOU WILL FIND...
...YOUR PATH.

I AM DELIGHTED BY YOUR RETURN!
YOU DID WELL!
CHEER

HEROIC OFFICERS!
PEOPLE WHO HAVE RETURNED FROM THE SQUILL FIELDS!

THE IRON KINGDOM CENTRAL SQUARE
CHATTER
MURMUR

WE WERE VICTORIOUS IN THE BATTLE OF THE SQUILL FIELDS!
WE DROVE BACK THE INVADERS ...
...AND STILL STAND ON OUR GRAND-FATHERS' LAND!
OUR 2,000 AND SOME COMPATRI-OTS WHO FELL IN THIS BATTLE WILL NOT RETURN...
...BUT I HAVE AN AN-NOUNCE-MENT TO MAKE!


CHEER
...AND WE HAVE PROTECT-ED OUR HOMES!
THERE ARE LIGHTS IN OUR SOULS...
THIS BATTLE CONCLUDES OUR CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE BLUE DEMONS!

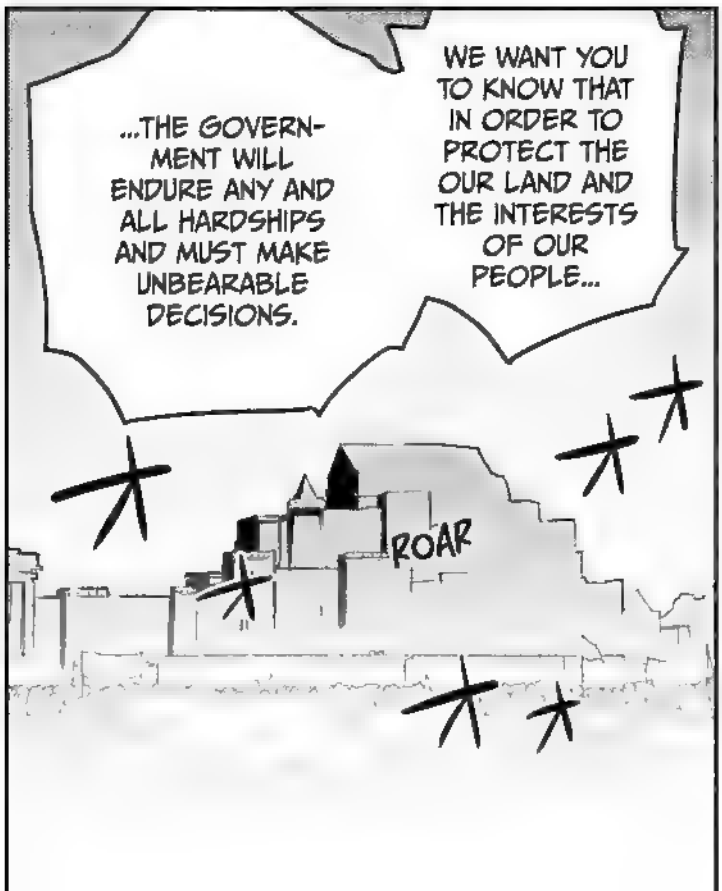
THE ALLIED FORCES OF THE CENTRAL CONTINENT...
THE HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE OF THE CHURCH OF HOLY LIGHT INDISCRIMINATELY ATTACKED US!

HOW-EVER...
...A SERIOUS INCIDENT OCCURRED AT THE BATTLE OF THE SQUILL FIELDS!

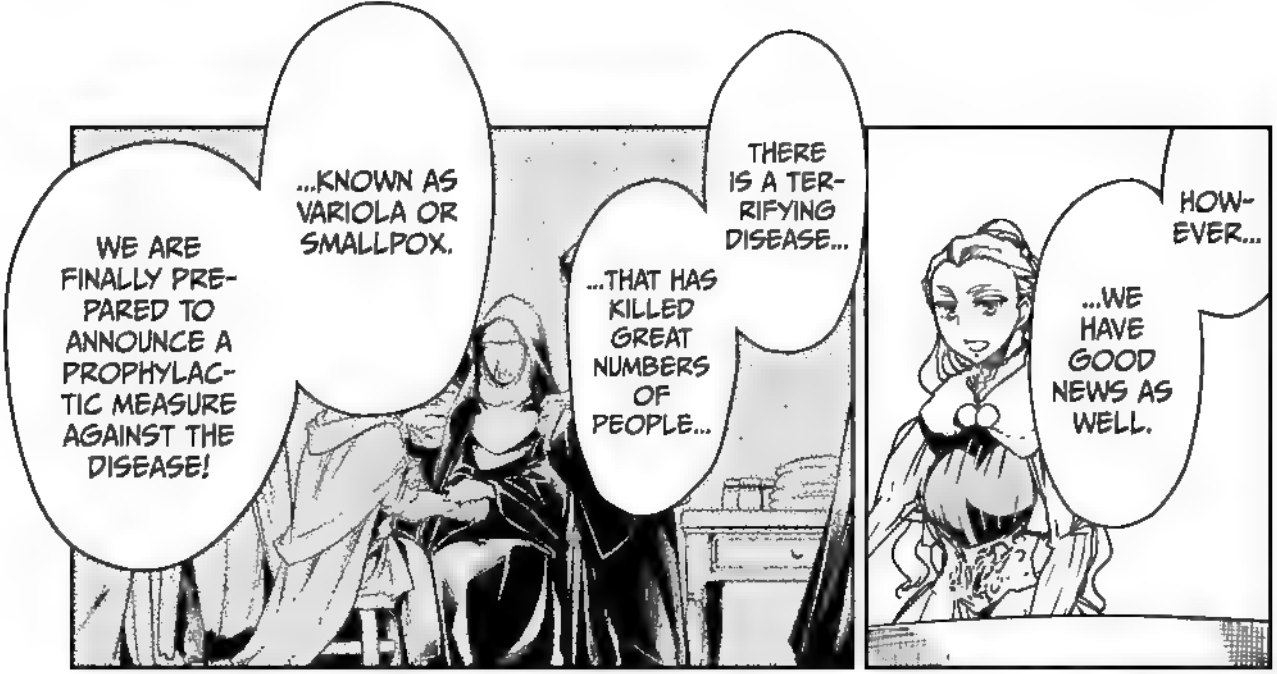
WE DESIRE PEACE AND PROSPERITY.
FOR THE COUNTRYMEN WE MUST PROTECT.
IT IS ALL FOR THIS LAND.
CHEER

...WHY WE SPILL OUR BLOOD.
I ASK THAT YOU REMEMBER...

THAT'S RIGHT!
ROAR
...NO MATTER WHO THEY ARE!
WE WILL DEFEND OUR HOME AGAINST ALL INVADERS...

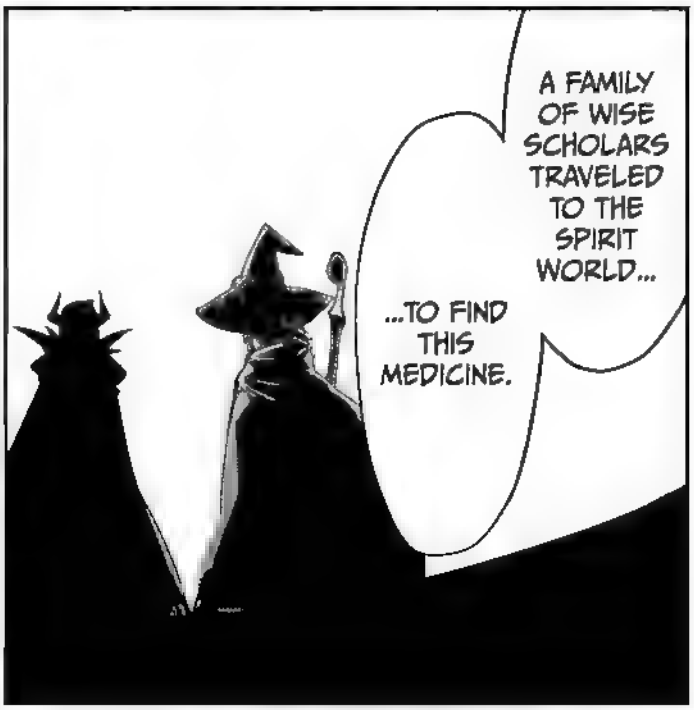

...THE GOVERNMENT WILL ENDURE ANY AND ALL HARDSHIPS AND MUST MAKE UNBEARABLE DECISIONS.
WE WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE OUR LAND AND THE INTERESTS OF OUR PEOPLE...
ROAR

HOWEVER...
...IF NECESSARY, WE WILL WORK WITH THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN OUR ENEMIES UNTIL YESTERDAY.
CHEER

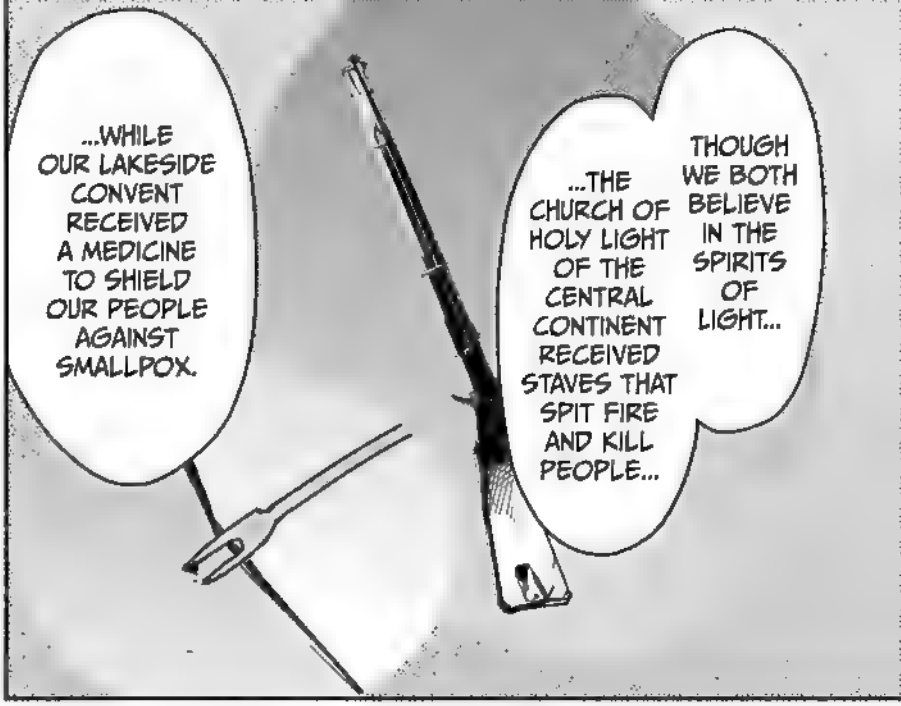

THERE IS A TERRIFYING DISEASE...
...THAT HAS KILLED GREAT NUMBERS OF PEOPLE...
...KNOWN AS VARIOLA OR SMALLPOX.
WE ARE FINALLY PREPARED TO ANNOUNCE A PROPHYLACTIC MEASURE AGAINST THE DISEASE!
HOWEVER...
...WE HAVE GOOD NEWS AS WELL.

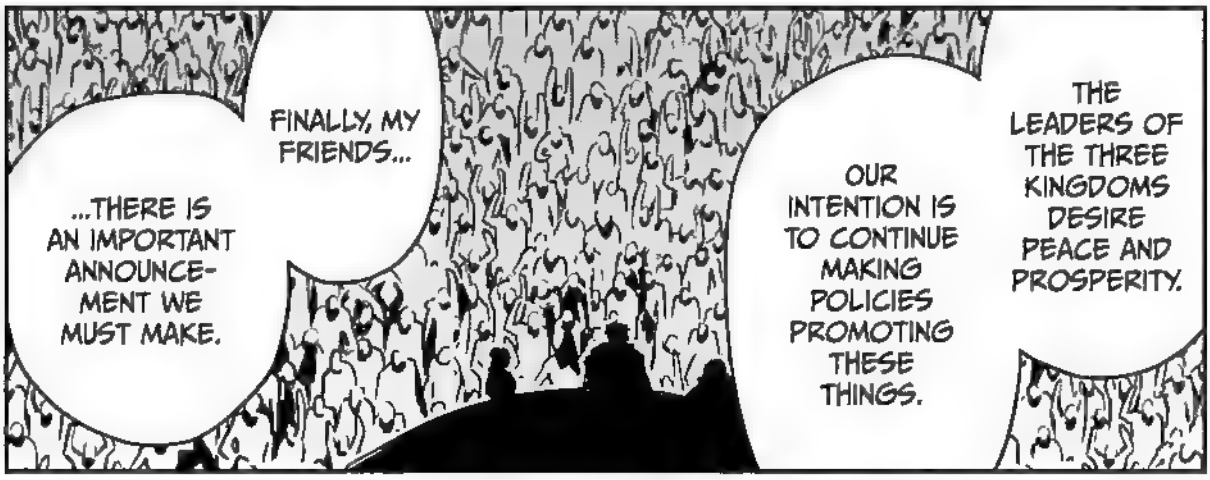
NOT A SINGLE ONE OF THE CHILDREN IN MY VILLAGE HAVE DEVELOPED POCKMARKS THIS YEAR!
I'VE ALREADY BEEN VACCINATED!
IT WAS JUST A PRICK
IT'S TRUE!
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
IS...
IS IT TRUE?

...BY THE GRACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
WE HAVE BEEN LED TO THIS MEDICINE THAT WILL SAVE HUMAN LIVES...

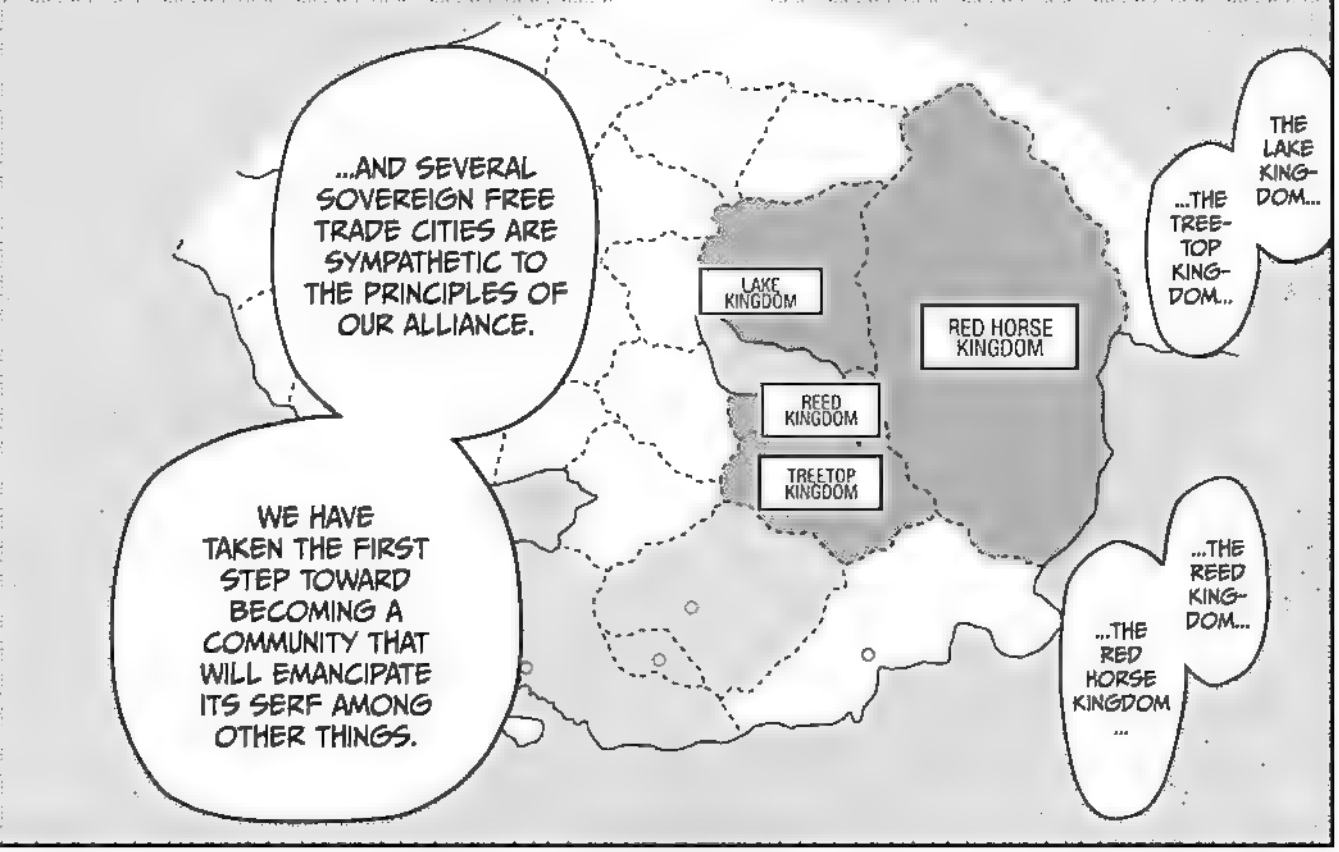

...TO FIND THIS MEDICINE.
A FAMILY OF WISE SCHOLARS TRAVELED TO THE SPIRIT WORLD...

I ASK THAT YOU CONSIDER WHY THESE TWO CHURCHES WERE GRANTED DIFFERENT THINGS.


...WHILE OUR LAKESIDE CONVENT RECEIVED A MEDICINE TO SHIELD OUR PEOPLE AGAINST SMALLPOX.
...THE CHURCH OF HOLY LIGHT OF THE CENTRAL CONTINENT RECEIVED STAVES THAT SPIT FIRE AND KILL PEOPLE...
THOUGH WE BOTH BELIEVE IN THE SPIRITS OF LIGHT...


...THERE IS AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCE-MENT WE MUST MAKE.
FINALLY, MY FRIENDS...
OUR INTENTION IS TO CONTINUE MAKING POLICIES PROMOTING THESE THINGS.
THE LEADERS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS DESIRE PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

NEW ALLIES HAVE APPEARED WHO ACCEPT THE IDEALS OF OUR ALLIANCE!
AS OF TODAY, THE THREE KINGDOM TRADE ALLIANCE IS DISSOLVED!
ROAR
おおお
CHATTER
ざわ
MURMUR
ひそ


...AND SEVERAL SOVEREIGN FREE TRADE CITIES ARE SYMPATHETIC TO THE PRINCIPLES OF OUR ALLIANCE.
WE HAVE TAKEN THE FIRST STEP TOWARD BECOMING A COMMUNITY THAT WILL EMANCIPATE ITS SERF AMONG OTHER THINGS.
LAKE KINGDOM
RED HORSE KINGDOM
REED KINGDOM
TREETOP KINGDOM
...THE TREE-TOP KING-DOM...
THE LAKE KING-DOM...
...THE RED HORSE KINGDOM ...
...THE REED KING-DOM...

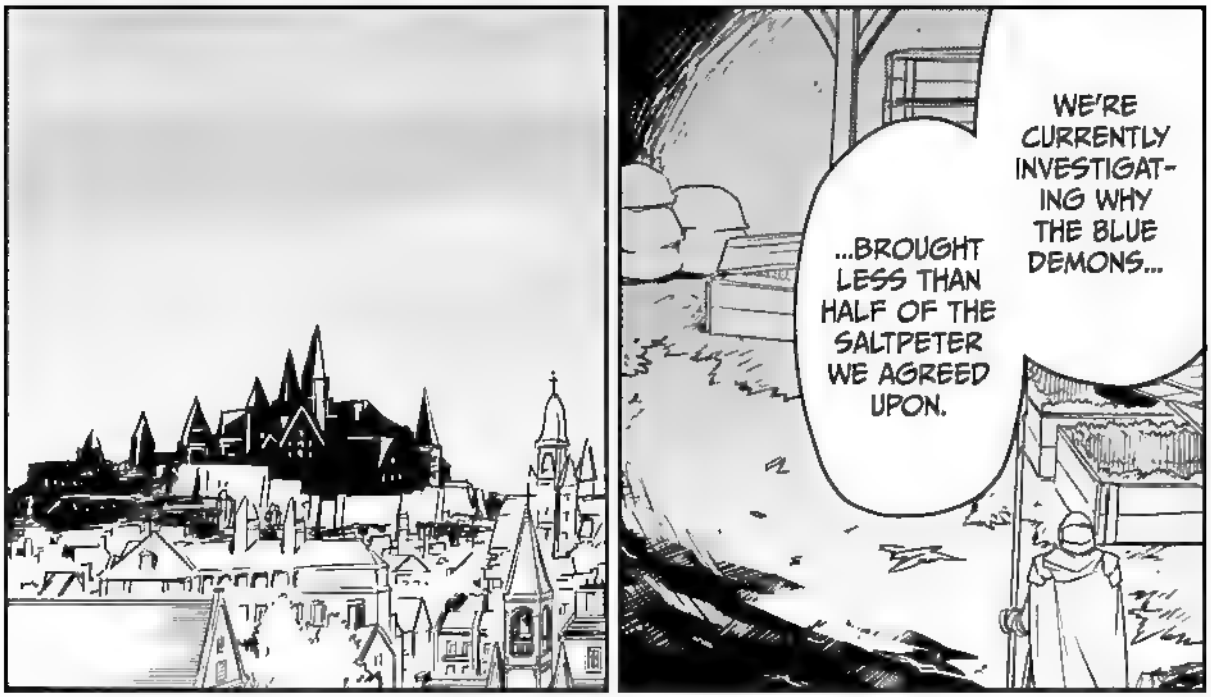
THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO EMBARK ON A JOURNEY...
...TO TAKE ROOT IN THIS WORLD...
...AND WORK TOWARD A FUTURE TOGETHER!

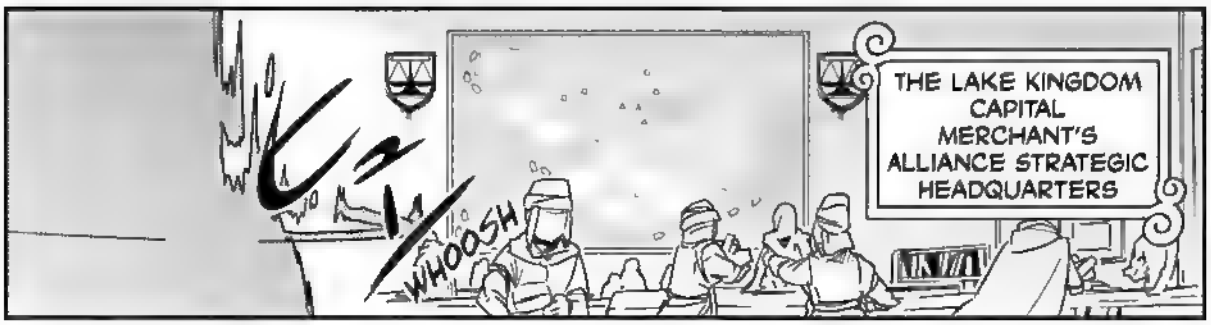
WE ARE NO LONGER THREE KINGDOMS!
THE TIME FOR SUFFERING ALONE AT THE SOUTHERN END OF THE WORLD HAS ENDED!
CHEER

SYM-
PATHY
FOR OUR
COUNTRY-
MEN.
OPEN-
MINDED-
NESS AND
SELF-
CONTROL.
HARD
WORK.
WE HAVE
GREAT LOVE
FOR THIS LAND
THAT IS THE
SOUL OF THE
SOUTHERN
KINGDOMS.
BUT MOST OF
ALL, AS ONE
WHO LOVES
FREEDOM AND
INDEPENDENCE...
...I NOW
ANNOUNCE
THE FORMA-
TION OF THE
SOUTHERN
CONFEDERA-
TION!
BOOM

THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION!
CHEER
KOAR
BLIZZARD QUEEN!
IRON FIST KING!
LONELY WINTER KING!
WE'RE NOT HERETICS ANYMORE.
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE ALLIES!
THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION?
MURMUR
YEAH, THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION!
MURMUR
ROAR
LONG LIVE THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION!
NOW WE HAVE A FOOTHOLD...
...INTO THE GATE AND THE SPIRIT WORLD.
MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM
GATE
AS PLANNED, WE WERE ABLE TO RECAPTURE THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM.
THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM ROYAL PALACE

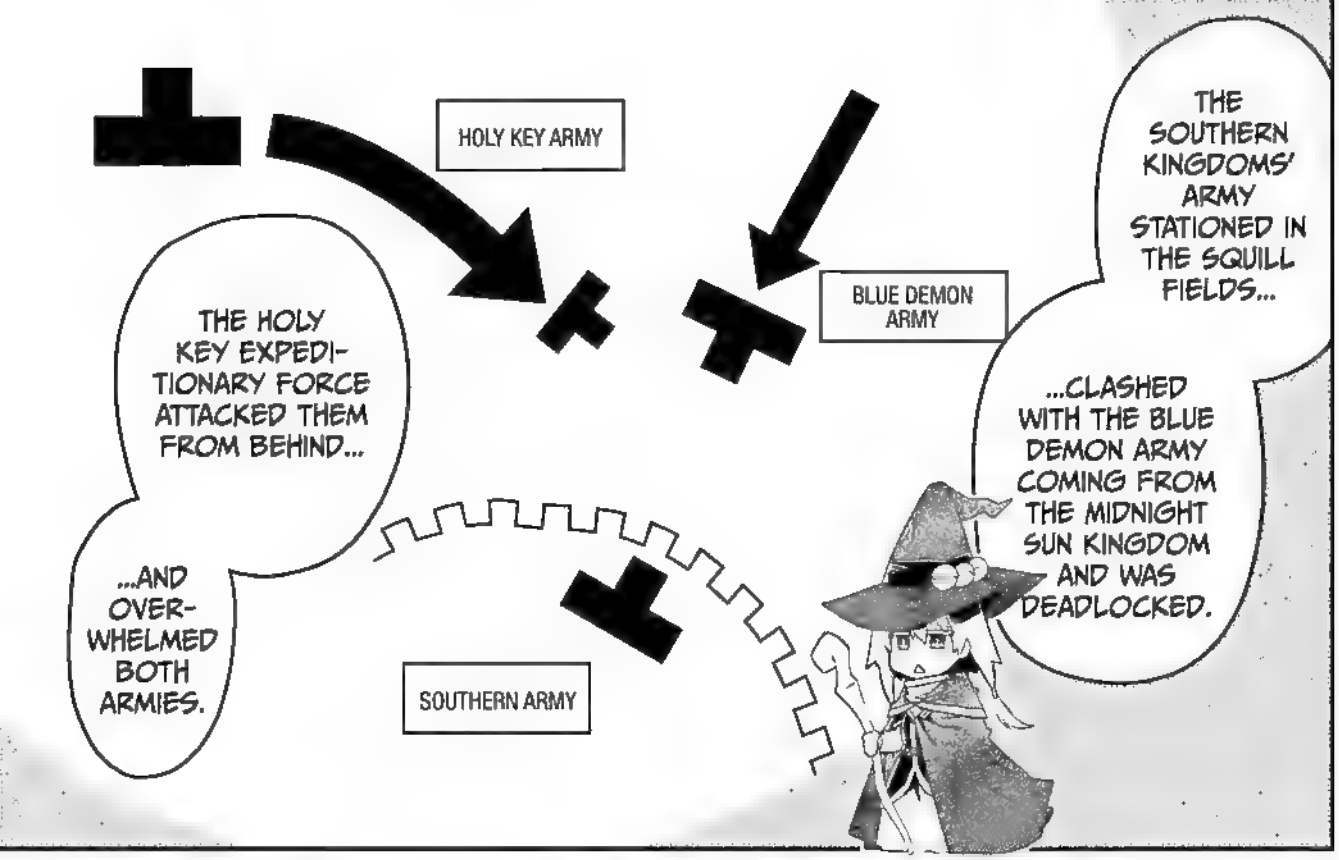
WE EXPECTED THE MAIN FORCE OF THE BLUE DEMON ARMY TO FALL AT THE SQUILL FIELDS...
...AND FOR THE CAPITAL'S DEFENSE TO BE UNDERMANNED.
BUT WE DIDN'T EXPECT THE MIDNIGHT SUN PEOPLE TO BE MISSING TOO.
DID THE BLUE DEMON ARMY SLAUGHTER ALL THE PEOPLE?
ACCORDING TO THE SURVIVING BLUE DEMONS WE QUESTIONED...
...THE SLAVES -- THE HUMANS WERE RELEASED BY A HUMAN ARMY.
SOMEONE GOT HERE BEFORE US.
COULD THEY HAVE BEEN SURVIVORS OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN ARMY?
HOWEVER...
...THE BIGGER PROBLEM IS...
YES.


WE'RE CURRENTLY INVESTIGATING WHY THE BLUE DEMONS...
...BROUGHT LESS THAN HALF OF THE SALTPETER WE AGREED UPON.

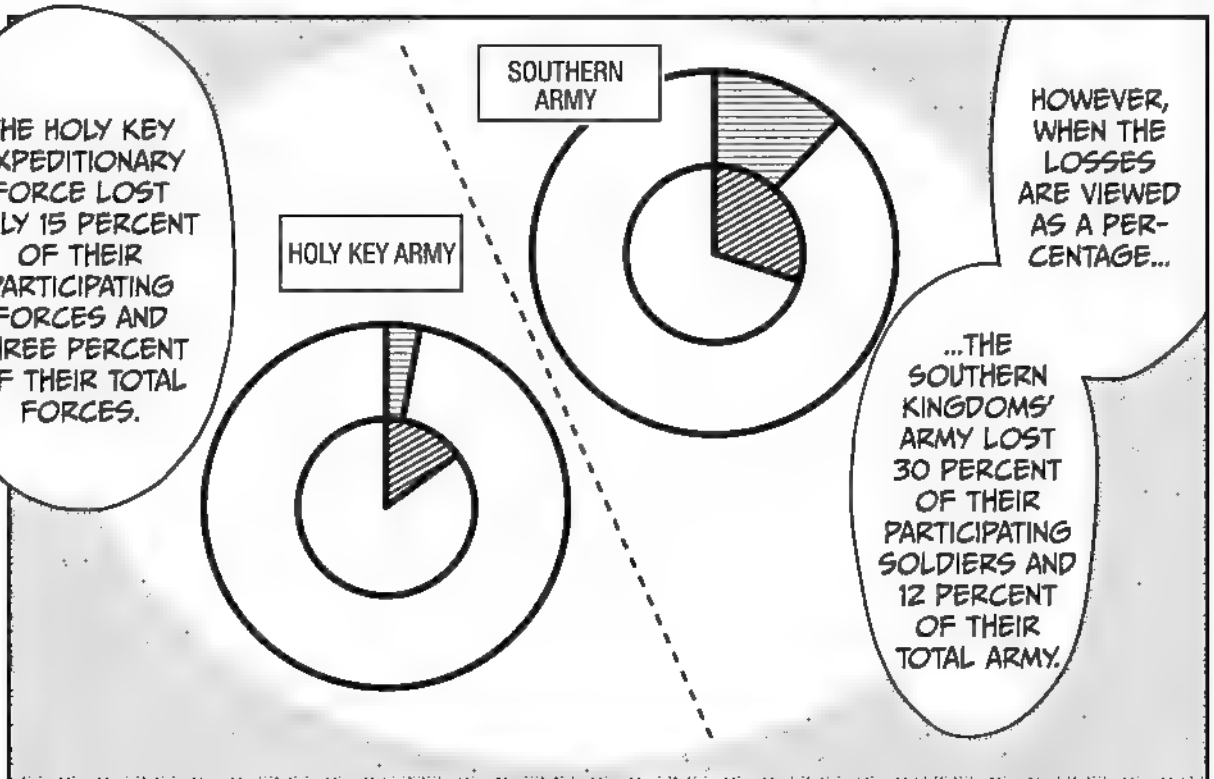

WHOOSH
THE LAKE KINGDOM CAPITAL MERCHANT'S ALLIANCE STRATEGIC HEADQUARTERS

I LEFT SOMEONE ELSE TO HANDLE GATEWAY CITY.
JUST NOW.
WHEN DID YOU RETURN?
COMMITTEE MEMBER!

UMM...
WHO IS SHE?
OH.
SHE TRANSPORTED ME HERE.
PREPARE SOME EXCELLENT FOOD AND SWEETS.
YES, SIR!
NOW THEN...
...WHAT IS THE SITUATION?
THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS CLASHED WITH THE CENTRAL CONTINENT'S EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.
THE CENTRAL FORCES USED SOME KIND OF NEW WEAPON.
FLIP FLIP
A NEW WEAPON?
MUSKETS.
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY ARE?
I WAS WATCHING.
CHEW
YOU WERE WATCHING THE WAR?
?!
YES.
COULD YOU PROVIDE MORE DETAILS?
NOD

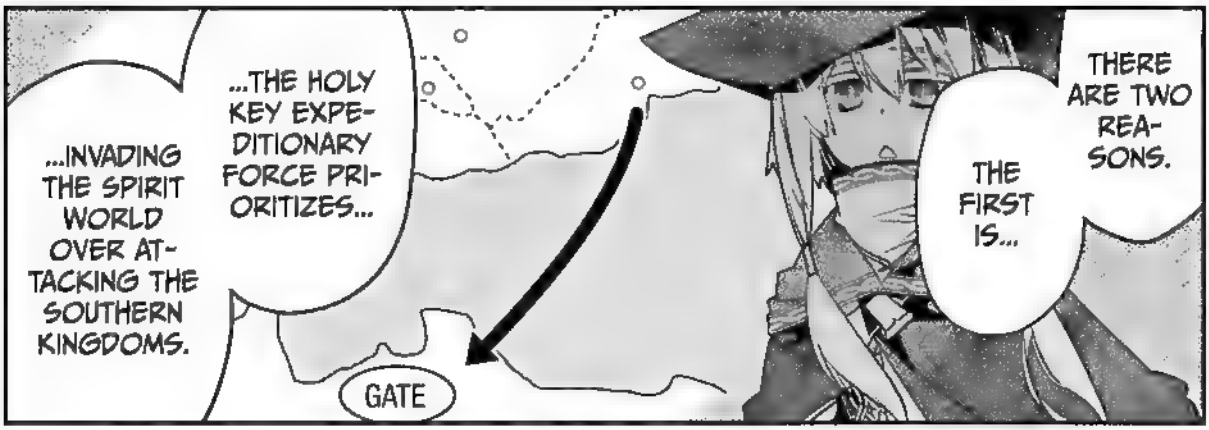

HOLY KEY ARMY
BLUE DEMON ARMY
SOUTHERN ARMY
THE HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE ATTACKED THEM FROM BEHIND...
...AND OVERWHELMED BOTH ARMIES.
THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS' ARMY STATIONED IN THE SQUILL FIELDS...
...CLASHED WITH THE BLUE DEMON ARMY COMING FROM THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM AND WAS DEADLOCKED.

...AND THE HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE LOST ROUGHLY 6,000.
THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS' ARMY LOST 3,500 SOLDIERS...
NEARLY ALL 20,000 OF THE BLUE DEMONS WERE KILLED IN THIS BATTLE.


THE HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE LOST ONLY 15 PERCENT OF THEIR PARTICIPATING FORCES AND THREE PERCENT OF THEIR TOTAL FORCES.
SOUTHERN ARMY
HOLY KEY ARMY
HOWEVER, WHEN THE LOSSES ARE VIEWED AS A PERCENTAGE...
...THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS' ARMY LOST 30 PERCENT OF THEIR PARTICIPATING SOLDIERS AND 12 PERCENT OF THEIR TOTAL ARMY.

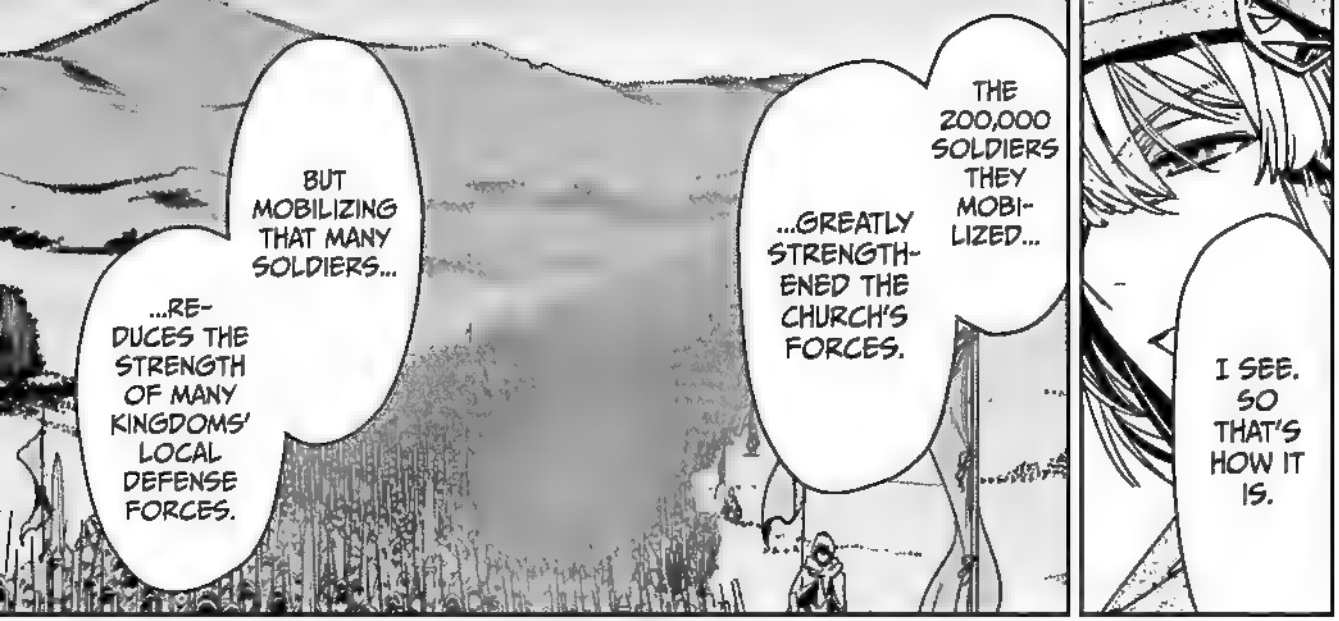
I WOULDN'T BE SO SURE.
THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS ARE ON THE BRINK OF DESTRUCTION.

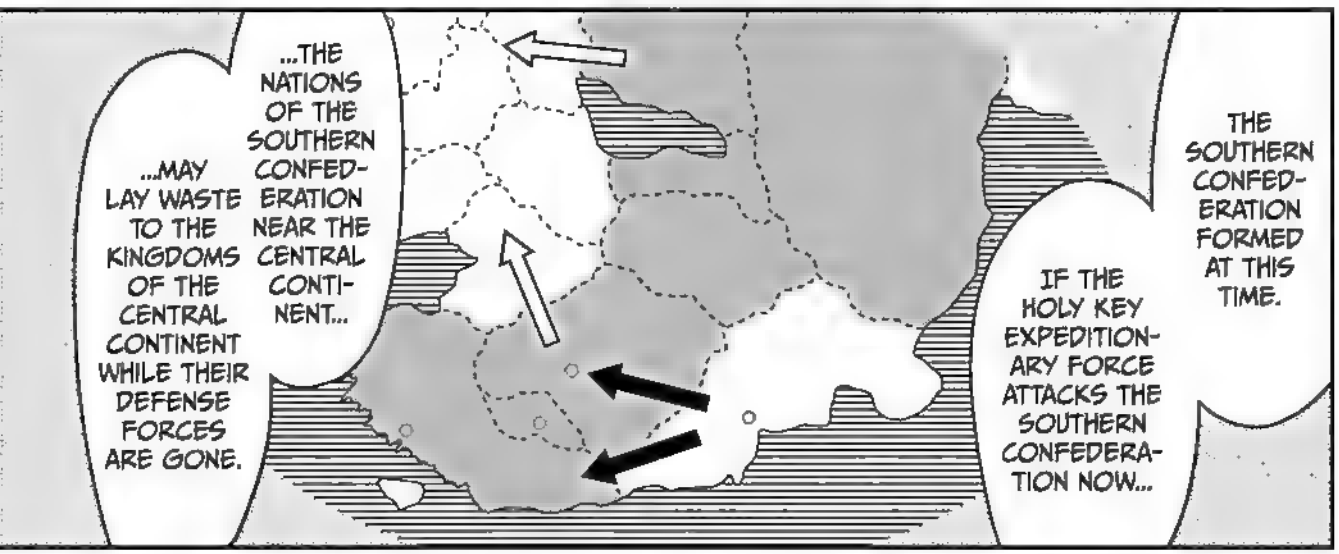
...THE HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE HAS OVER 200,000 SOLDIERS.
IF YOU IGNORE THE DEGREE OF THEIR TRAINING ...

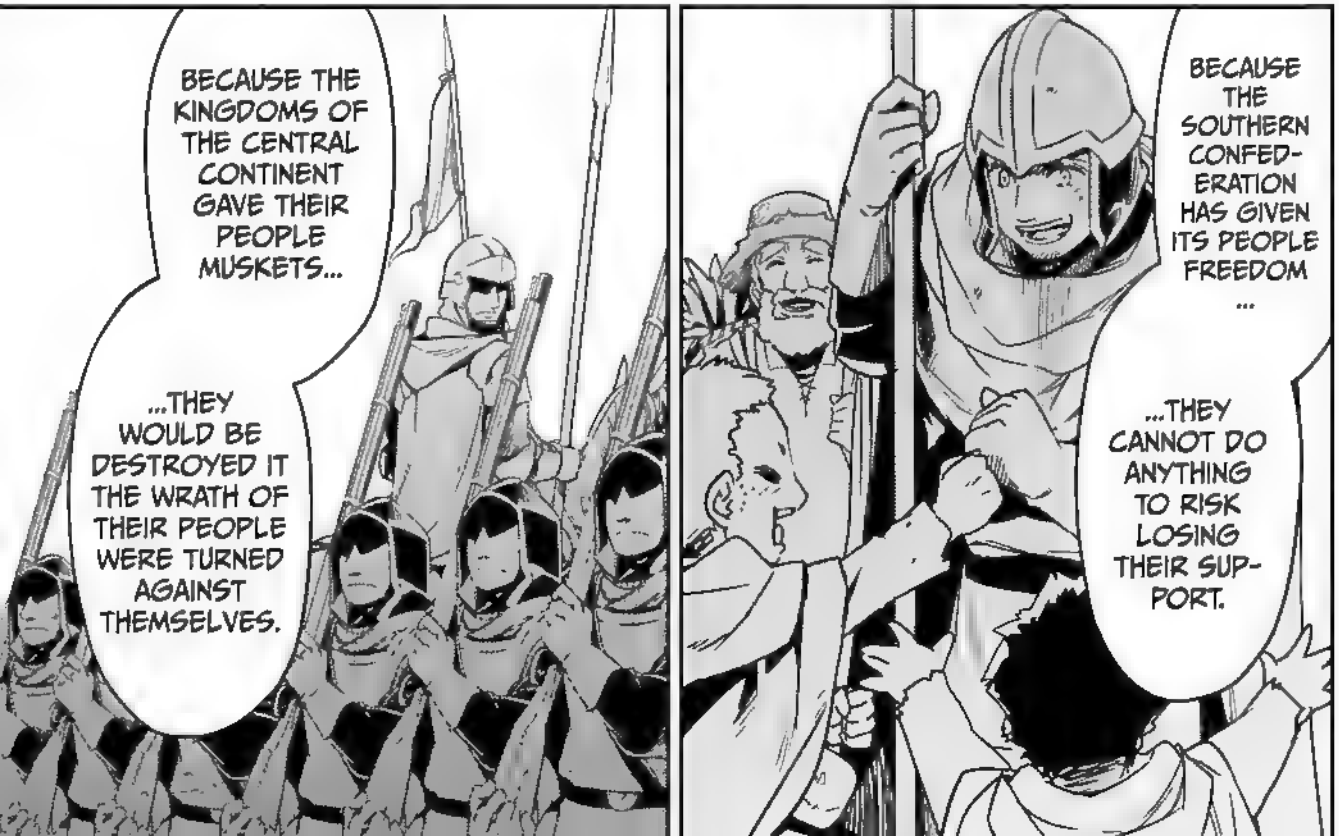

...INVADING THE SPIRIT WORLD OVER ATTACKING THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS.
...THE HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE PRIORITIZES...
GATE
THE FIRST IS...
THERE ARE TWO REASONS.

...THE RED HORSE KINGDOM...
...THE TREETOP KINGDOM...
CENTRAL CONTINENT AND HOLY KINGDOM
...THE REED KINGDOM...
...AND INCORPORATED THE LAKE KINGDOM...
SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION
...AND SEVERAL SOVEREIGN FREE TRADE CITIES TO FORM THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION.

WHAT IS THE OTHER REASON?
IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE BATTLE BEGAN, THE THREE KINGDOM TRADE ALLIANCE ABANDONED ITS NAME...

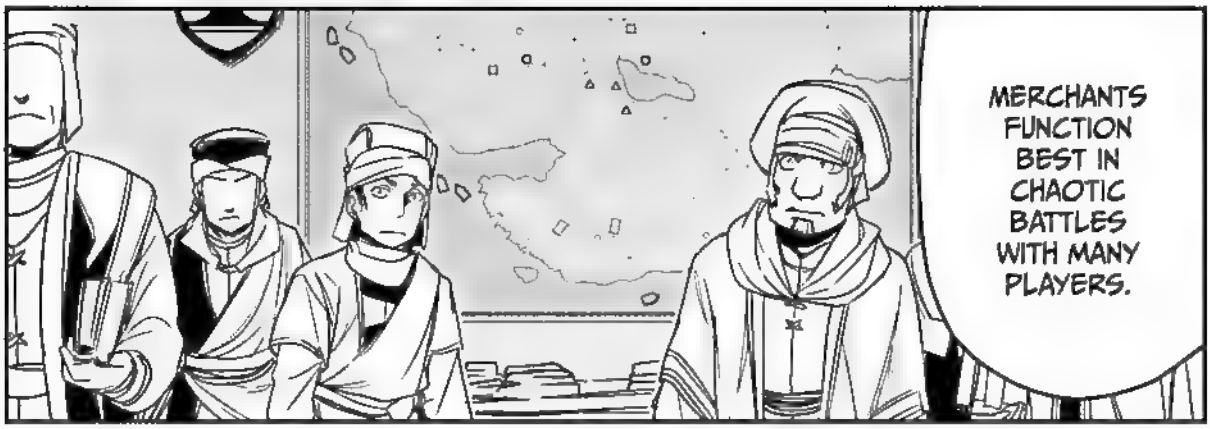

I SEE. SO THAT'S HOW IT IS.
THE 200,000 SOLDIERS THEY MOBILIZED...
...GREATLY STRENGTHENED THE CHURCH'S FORCES.
BUT MOBILIZING THAT MANY SOLDIERS...
...REDUCES THE STRENGTH OF MANY KINGDOMS' LOCAL DEFENSE FORCES.


THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION FORMED AT THIS TIME.
IF THE HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE ATTACKS THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION NOW...
...THE NATIONS OF THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION NEAR THE CENTRAL CONTINENT...
...MAY LAY WASTE TO THE KINGDOMS OF THE CENTRAL CONTINENT WHILE THEIR DEFENSE FORCES ARE GONE.


BECAUSE THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION HAS GIVEN ITS PEOPLE FREEDOM ...
...THEY CANNOT DO ANYTHING TO RISK LOSING THEIR SUPPORT.
BECAUSE THE KINGDOMS OF THE CENTRAL CONTINENT GAVE THEIR PEOPLE MUSKETS...
...THEY WOULD BE DESTROYED IT THE WRATH OF THEIR PEOPLE WERE TURNED AGAINST THEMSELVES.

BUT THERE IS A CHANCE MERCHANTS MAY PREVAIL.

BOTH OF THEM MUST TREAD CAREFULLY.


MERCHANTS FUNCTION BEST IN CHAOTIC BATTLES WITH MANY PLAYERS.

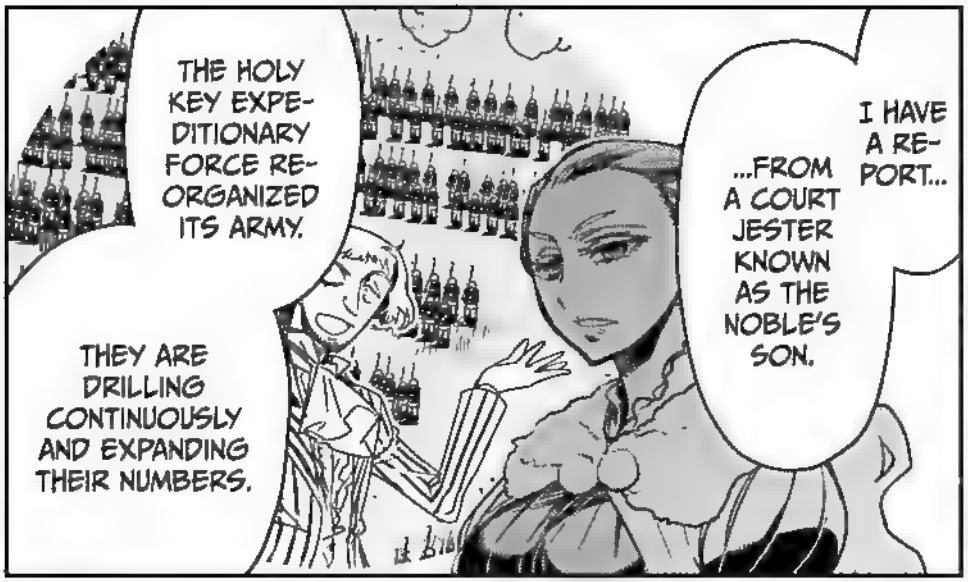
PREPARE TO OPEN BARS AND BROTHELS AT THE THREE LOCATIONS.
WE'LL GET EYES AND EARS ON THEM.
YES, SIR!

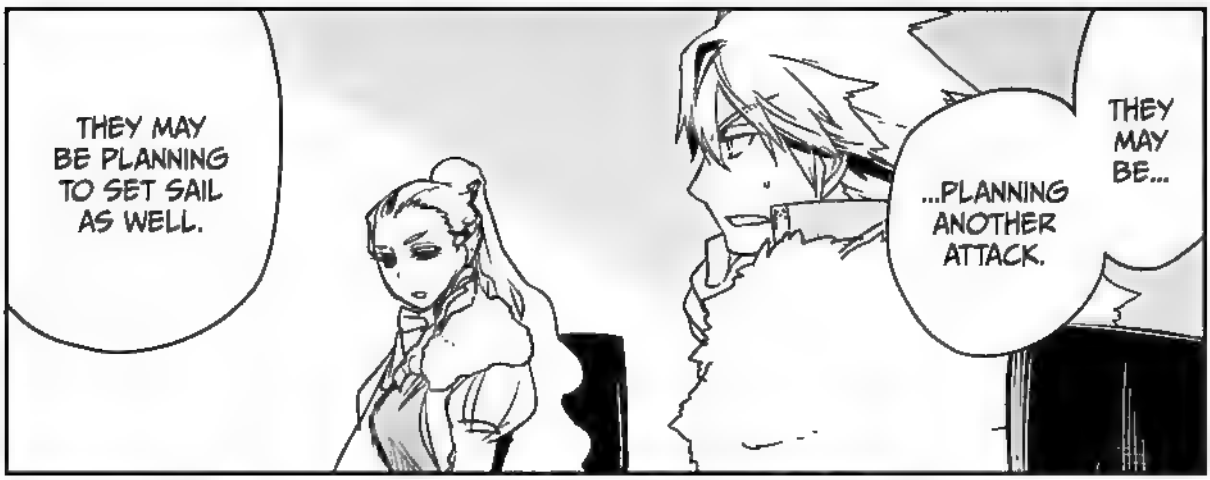
HAVE YOU FOUND THE CENTRAL CONTINENT'S SECRET IRONWORKS?
YES.
IT'S IN THE COPPER KING-DOM.
THERE ARE THREE LOCA-TIONS TOTAL.

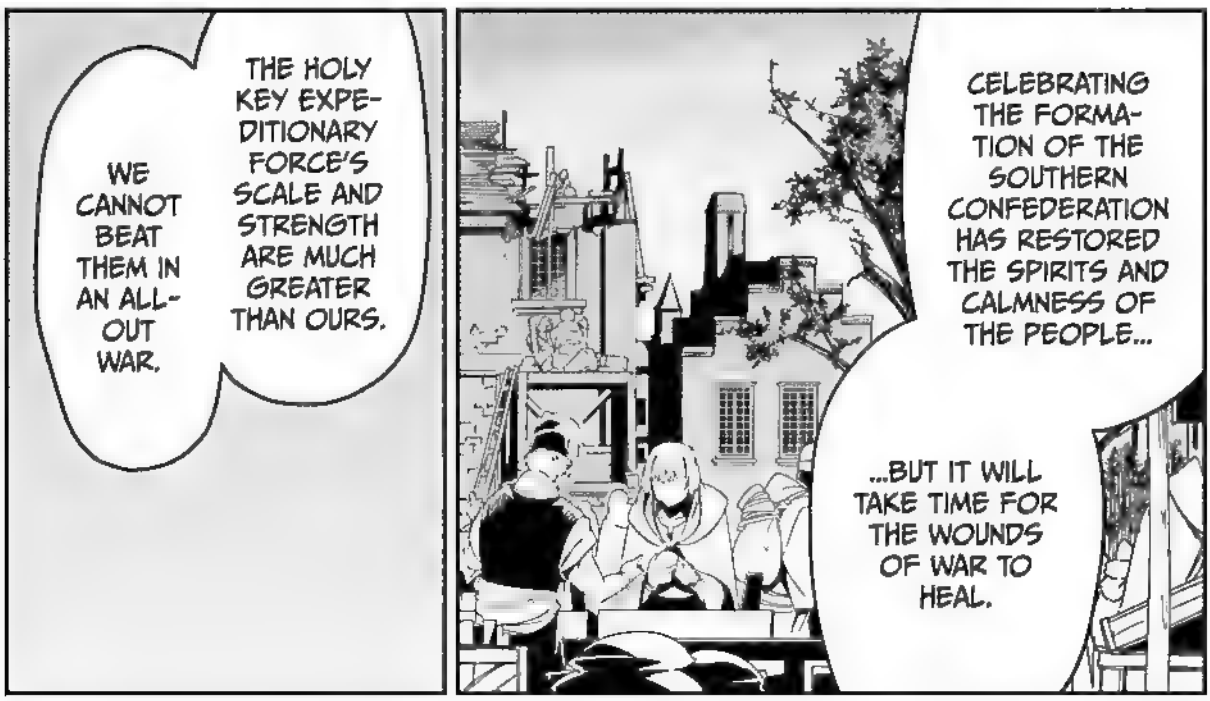
MUSKETS ARE MACHINES.
THEY MUST REQUIRE SPARE PARTS FOR WHEN THEY BREAK.
THEY WILL HAVE AMMUNITION...
...AND ENOUGH FOOD TO FEED 200,000 SOLDIERS AS WELL.
CALCULATE THE NUMBER OF MUSKETS THE HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE HAS.
!
WE WILL SEIZE THEIR SUPPLY SOURCES.
THEIR SIZE IS A WEAPON AND A WEAKNESS.
MOVING SUCH A LARGE BODY REQUIRES A MASSIVE PURSE.
THE POWER OF THE NEW WEAPON AND THE 200,000 SOLDIERS WIELDING THEM.
THEY WERE ENOUGH TO EASILY DEFEAT THE POWERFUL BLUE DEMON AND SOUTHERN KINGDOMS' ARMIES.

...REQUIRES TWO TO THREE TIMES AS MUCH CHARCOAL AS IRON ORE.
HOW-EVER ...
...MANU-FACTURING IRON...
WE CAN PRESUME THE HOLY KINGDOM HAS SIGNIFICANT QUANTITIES OF IRON ORE IN STORAGE.
...THE QUANTITY OF CHARCOAL GOING FORWARD.
IT WILL NOT BE DIFFICULT TO CONTROL...
...HAS JOINED THE SOUTHERN CONFED-ERATION.
THE TREETOP KINGDOM THAT PRODUCES THE MOST CHAR-COAL OUT OF THE NATIONS NEAR THE HOLY KINGDOM...
GET TO IT!
YES, SIR!
YES, SIR!
YES, SIR!
WE WILL TRANSPORT THIS FOOD OVER WATER...
...FROM THE PORTS OF FREE TRADE CITIES TO THE HARBORS OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM AND MAKE A MARGINAL PROFIT.
...WHO TRAVELED TO THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM REQUIRES A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF FOOD.
FEEDING ALL 200,000 PEOPLE...

WITHOUT YOUR HELP, I MAY HAVE BEEN TOO LATE.
IS THERE ANY WAY I CAN THANK YOU?
IS IT OVER?
YES. SOME-HOW.
I SHALL HAVE FOOD PREPARED FOR YOU IMMEDIATELY.
GROWL
IT IS A GIFT TO HER.
....
WHY DID YOU HELP ME?
FOR MY OWN REA-SONS.
THE MERE HUMAN WHO COULD NOT BE-COME...
...A MEMBER OF THE LIBRARY CLAN.


I HAVE A REPORT...
...FROM A COURT JESTER KNOWN AS THE NOBLE'S SON.
THE HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE REORGANIZED ITS ARMY.
THEY ARE DRILLING CONTINUOUSLY AND EXPANDING THEIR NUMBERS.


THEY MAY BE...
...PLANNING ANOTHER ATTACK.
THEY MAY BE PLANNING TO SET SAIL AS WELL.


CELEBRATING THE FORMATION OF THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION HAS RESTORED THE SPIRITS AND CALMNESS OF THE PEOPLE...
...BUT IT WILL TAKE TIME FOR THE WOUNDS OF WAR TO HEAL.
THE HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE'S SCALE AND STRENGTH ARE MUCH GREATER THAN OURS.
WE CANNOT BEAT THEM IN AN ALL-OUT WAR.

ACCORDING TO HIS REPORT, THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE...
...WAS MOBILIZED BY THE ARCHBISHOP HIMSELF.
IF THE ARMY DISBANDS NOW, IT WILL AFFECT...
...THE PRESTIGE OF THE ARCHBISHOP AND THE CHURCH OF HOLY LIGHT.
THIS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE MUST PRODUCE RESULTS.
WHAT WE NEED IS TIME...
...TO RECOVER FROM OUR WOUNDS.
FOR THAT REASON...
...WE MUST MAKE A DECISION REGARDING THAT PROBLEM.

THE DEMONS DISPATCHED A PUNITIVE FORCE IN PURSUIT OF THE BLUE DEMONS.
WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU...
...TO SPEAK WITH THEM...
...IRON FIST KING.
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
THIS WAY.
CHATTER
HMPH.
CHATTER

....
HEY.
BRING US SOME-THING TO DRINK.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT US.
STEP
I'M GLAD TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT.
WE ARE SOLDIERS TOO. YOU NEED NOT CONCERN YOURSELF WITH FORMALITIES.

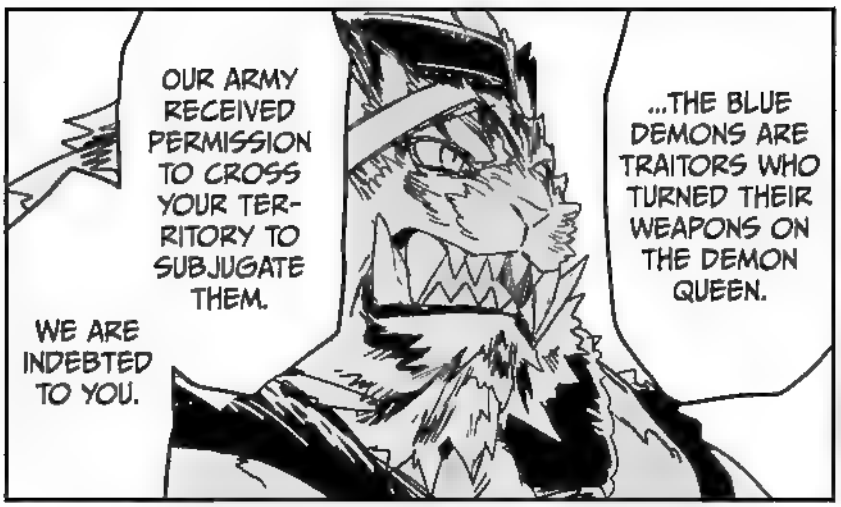
I'M THE COMMANDER OF THE EASTERN FORTRESS ...
...FORMERLY A MERCENARY OF THE SECOND HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.
NOW I RUN GATEWAY CITY'S SELF-GOVERNING ASSEMBLY...
...AND I'M THE CHIEF OF THE GATEWAY CLAN, ONE OF NINE CLANS OF THE SPIRIT WORLD.
I'VE BEEN APPOINTED THE LEFT GENERAL OF THE BLUE DEMON SUBJUGATION OPERATION.

I AM THE SILVER TIGER!
I AM THE CHIEF OF THE FANGED DEMON CLAN, ONE OF NINE CLANS OF THE SPIRIT WORLD!
I HAVE BEEN APPOINTED THE RIGHT GENERAL OF THIS BATTLE!

I WAS SECOND IN COMMAND AT THE BATTLE OF THE SQUILL FIELDS.
I AM THE LORD PROTECTOR OF THE IRON KINGDOM.
I AM CALLED THE SOLDIER'S SON.

TODAY HE HAS COME TO THIS MEETING AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION.
THIS IS THE IRON FIST KING.
HE IS THE KING OF THE IRON KINGDOM AND A LEADER OF THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION.

HMPH!


WE ARE INDEBTED TO YOU.
OUR ARMY RECEIVED PERMISSION TO CROSS YOUR TERRITORY TO SUBJUGATE THEM.
...THE BLUE DEMONS ARE TRAITORS WHO TURNED THEIR WEAPONS ON THE DEMON QUEEN.

FIRST I WILL TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO INFORM YOU...

...TO SPILL OVER INTO THE HUMAN WORLD.
...WOULD LIKE TO APOLOGIZE FOR ALLOWING THEIR INTERNAL POWER STRUGGLE...
THE CLANS ALSO...

IRON KING.
THIS IS NO TIME TO BE STUBBORN.

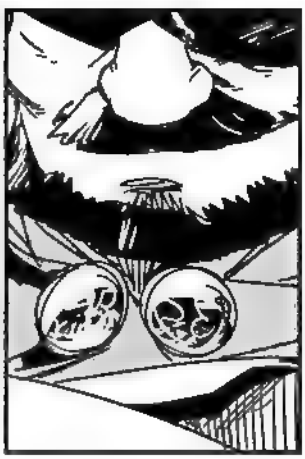
....

I HEARD THE FANGED DEMONS SUFFERED MANY LOSSES IN THE BATTLE.
YOU ARE CORRECT!
SOME OF MY CLANSMEN FELL TO THE MYSTERIOUS WEAPONS WIELDED BY THE INTRUDING HUMAN ARMY!
HOWEVER, THEY ARE STILL HEROES OF THE FANGED DEMONS!
THEY DIED HEROIC DEATHS!
ARE YOU FRUSTRATED TO BE DEFEATED BY HUMANS?
THOUGH OUR LOSS IS REGRETTABLE...
...IT IS NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF!
THE ONLY BATTLES ONE SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF ARE BETRAYALS OF LOYALTY...
...SUCH AS WHAT THE BLUE DEMONS DID!

WHER-EVER WE ARE, IF WE DIE IN BATTLE...
OURS IS A CLAN OF WAR-RIORS.
...WE BELIEVE WE HAVE ACHIEVED GLORY.

DOES DYING IN A FOREIGN LAND SO FAR FROM YOUR HOMES...
...NOT FEEL FRUIT-LESS?

I'LL HAVE SOME GOODS AND LIQUOR DELIVERED TO YOU LATER.
LET'S GO.
STEP



CLANK

HE'S RIGHT!
WE SHOULD AT LEAST SPEAK A LITTLE MORE!
SHOULDN'T WE USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS SOME THINGS?
YOU CAME ALL THE WAY HERE.

HOWEVER, THE IRON KINGDOM IS A NATION OF WARRIORS AS WELL.
WAR-RIORS HAVE THEIR OWN ETI-QUETTE.
I CANNOT SHAKE THE HAND OF A DEMON YET.
I APPRECI-ATE YOUR CONSID-ERATION.
WE BOTH LOST SOLDIERS.
WHAT WE NEED NOW TO LET THEM GO ARE TIME AND LIQUOR.
LET'S GO!
YES, SIR!
STEP
THE NEXT WE MEET, WE CAN DRINK WITH FEWER RESER-VATIONS.
I HOPE THAT DAY COMES.

RUSTLE
RUSTLE
FANGED WARRIORS. LIFT YOUR SPEARS AS YOU SEND THEM OFF!
MAY YOUR WARRIOR SOULS BE CONSOLED!
ROAR
HOWL
HOWL
HOWL
WHERE IS THE BLACK KNIGHT?
WE SEARCHED THE AREA THOR-OUGHLY...
...BUT WE BELIEVE HE MAY HAVE ESCAPED.

THEY WERE AS TOUGH AS INSECTS.
TSK
IF THOSE FILTHY MERCE-NARIES HADN'T ATTACKED US...
...WE WOULD HAVE CAPTURED HIM.
WHAT ABOUT HIS EXCEL-LENCY?
HE IS MEDITATING INSIDE.
!!
ROAR

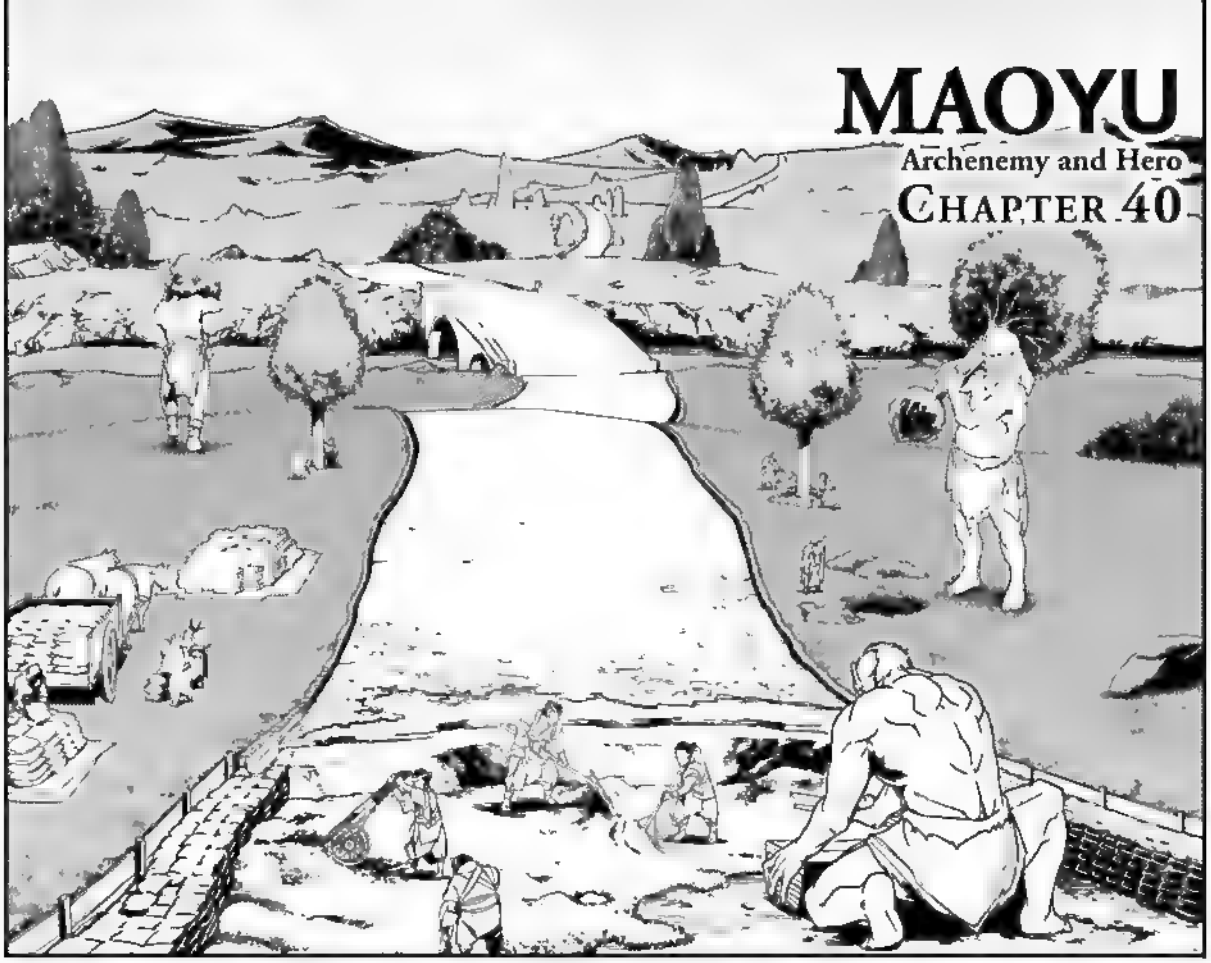
THE END

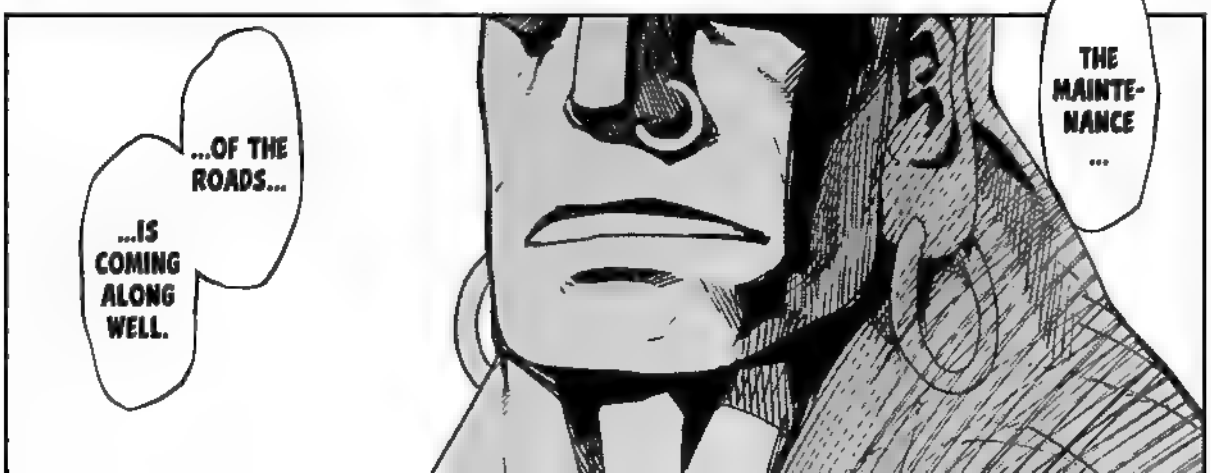
CHAPTER 39
Save Them Your Own Way

MAOYU

Archenemy and Hero

CHAPTER 40





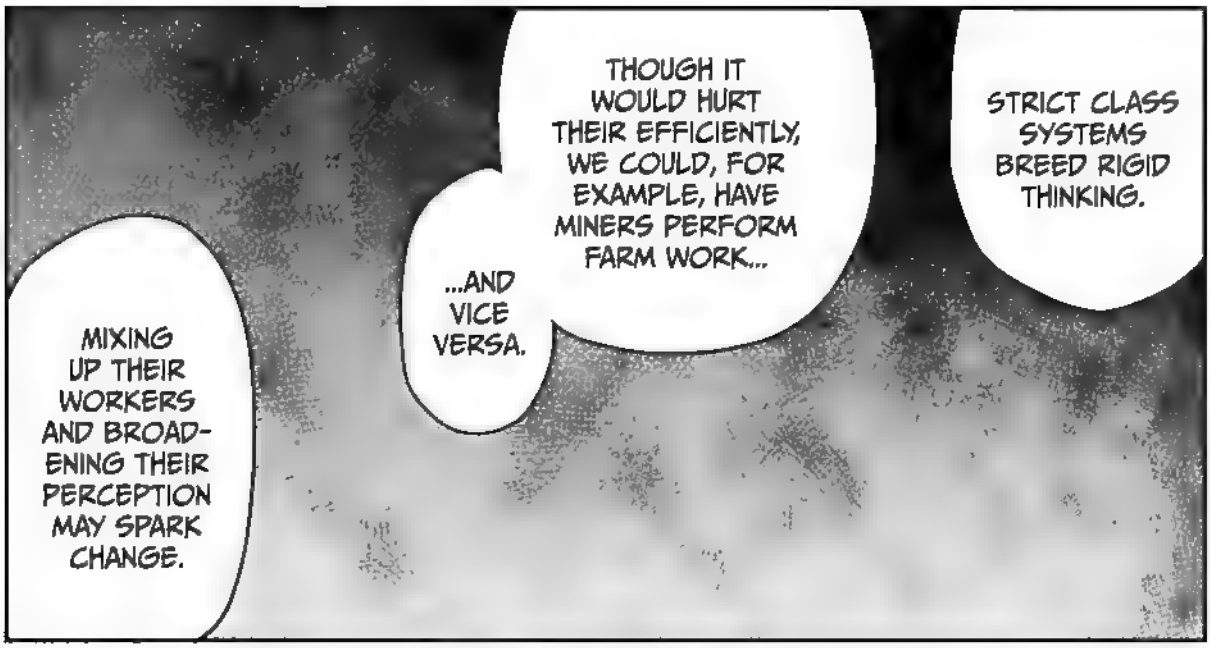
CHAPTER 40 Archenemy and Hero

We Can't Lose

WE SENT THEM ALL THE FOOD THEY'LL NEED FOR A WHILE FROM OUR CITY'S STORES.
THE BLUE DEMONS TOOK MOST OF THESE WITH THEM.
THEY LACK...
...CLOTHING AND FOOD.
THE HIGHEST CLASS WAS HELD ALMOST ENTIRELY BY SOLDIERS.
THE BLUE DEMONS HAVE ALWAYS HAD A RIGID CLASS SYSTEM.
THEY HAVE MANY MENTAL PROBLEMS AS WELL.
ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE HIGHEST CLASS SUDDENLY LEFT.
THEY CANNOT ACCEPT THE FACT...
...THEY WERE ABANDONED.
THEY LACK THE ENERGY TO DO ANYTHING AND ARE DAZED.

MIX...
...THEM...
...UP?
WE NEED...
...TO DO SOMETHING TO MIX THEM UP.

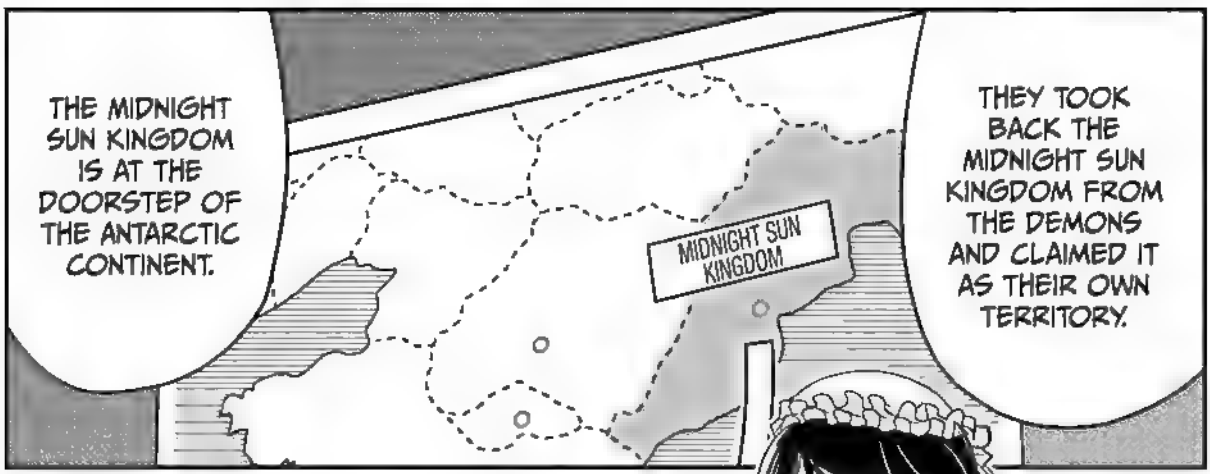
BZZ
DO YOU HAVE ANY WISDOM TO SHARE?
BZZ

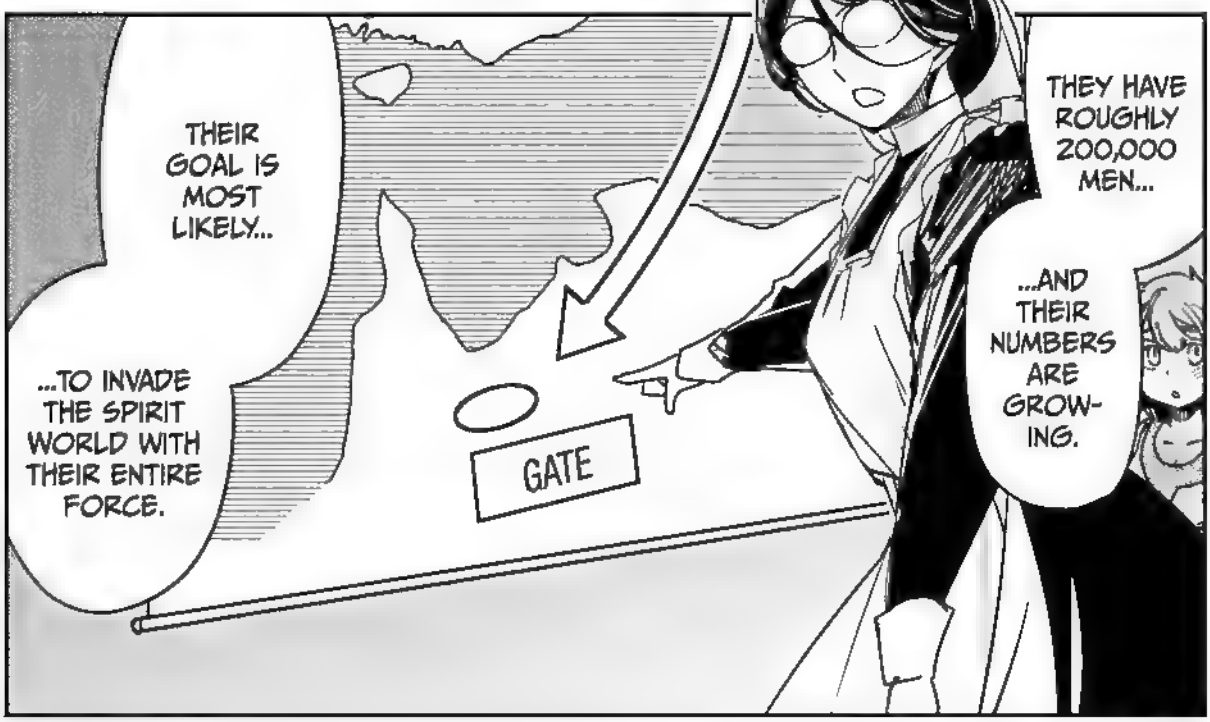

MIXING UP THEIR WORKERS AND BROADENING THEIR PERCEPTION MAY SPARK CHANGE.
...AND VICE VERSA.
THOUGH IT WOULD HURT THEIR EFFICIENTLY, WE COULD, FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE MINERS PERFORM FARM WORK...
STRICT CLASS SYSTEMS BREED RIGID THINKING.

...HOW ARE THE DEMON QUEEN AND THE OTHERS WHO HEADED TO THE SURFACE?
BY THE WAY...
I SEE.
WE SHOULD SEND THEM ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES AND ENACT APPROPRIATE POLICIES.

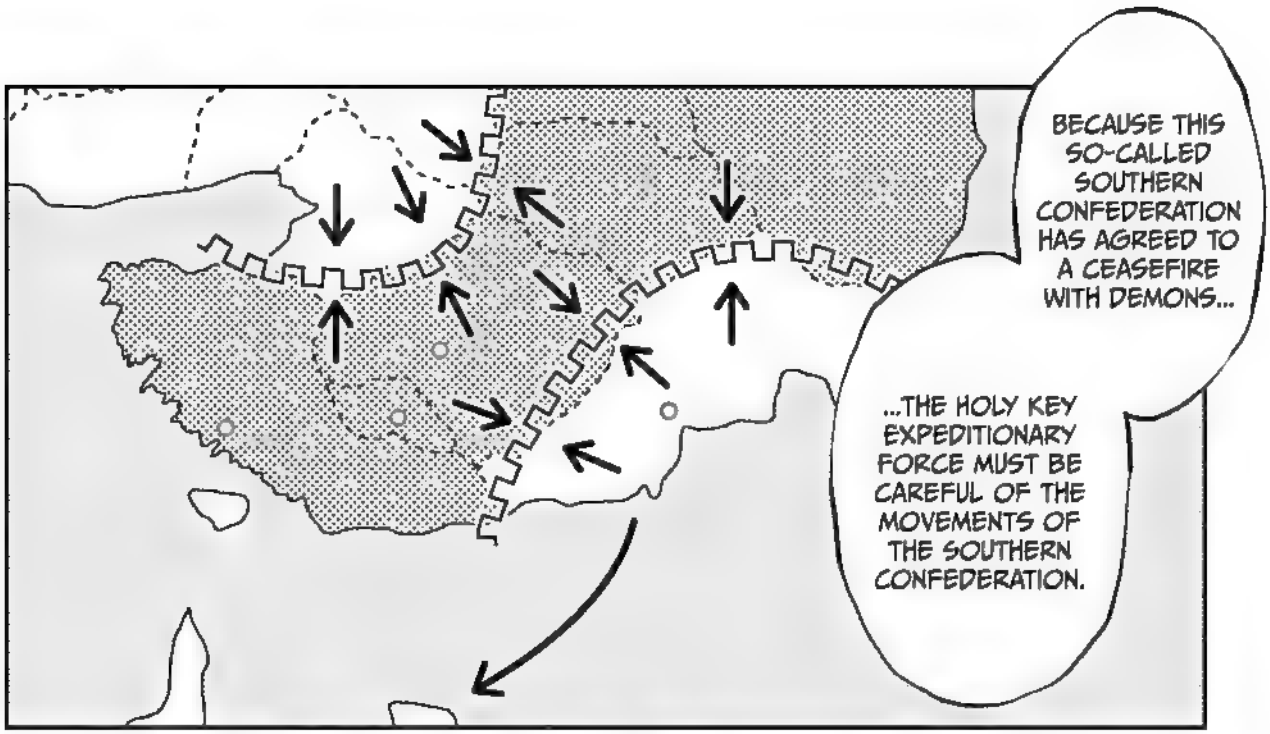
THEY ACCOMPLISHED THEIR PRIMARY GOAL ON THE SURFACE...
...OF SUBJUGATING THE BLUE DEMONS.
I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM THE DEMON QUEEN REGARDING THEIR SITUATION.
...A CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT WITH THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION THEY FOUGHT ALONGSIDE IN THE BATTLE.
ADDITIONALLY, THEY ARE...
...MAKING PROGRESS TOWARD ...
WE MUST BE CAUTIOUS.
THAT IS WHAT SHE TOLD ME.
HOWEVER, THE CENTRAL CONTINENT AND CHURCH OF HOLY LIGHT...
...ARE PLANNING A THIRD INVASION INTO THE SPIRIT WORLD.

THEY ARE THE MOST POWERFUL CHURCH AND NATIONS OF THE SURFACE.
THE CHURCH OF HOLY LIGHT?
THE CENTRAL CONTI-NENT?


THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM IS AT THE DOORSTEP OF THE ANTARCTIC CONTINENT.
MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM
THEY TOOK BACK THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM FROM THE DEMONS AND CLAIMED IT AS THEIR OWN TERRITORY.


THEIR GOAL IS MOST LIKELY...
...TO INVADE THE SPIRIT WORLD WITH THEIR ENTIRE FORCE.
GATE
THEY HAVE ROUGHLY 200,000 MEN...
...AND THEIR NUMBERS ARE GROW-ING.

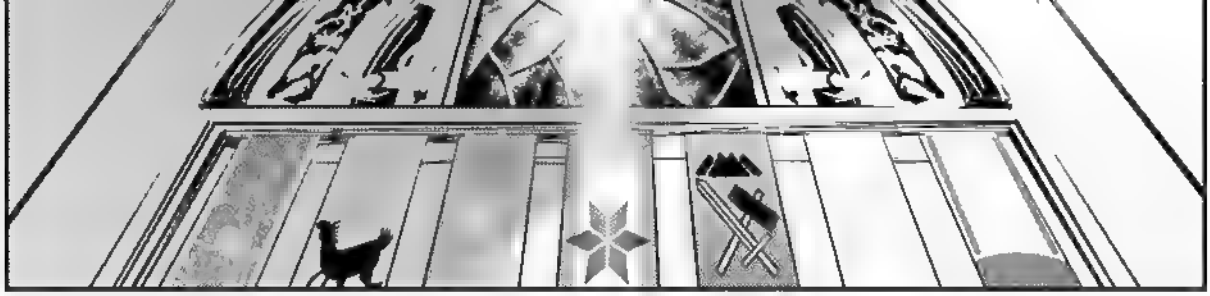
IT MEANS THE HUMAN WORLD IS NOT MONOLITHIC, EITHER.
THEY ARE LIKE US AND THE BLUE DEMONS.
BZZ
BEEP
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
THE DEMON QUEEN IS TRYING TO SIGN A CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT WITH THE INVADING HUMANS?
BZZ
THE HUMANS ...
...ARE COMING?
...THEY ARE RATHER POWERFUL NATIONS.
...BUT DESPITE HOW FEW THERE ARE...
...A CEASE FIRE AGREEMENT WITH SEVEN NATIONS...
THE DEMON QUEEN IS ONLY ATTEMPTING TO REACH...
NO, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE.
...300,000 SOLDIERS MAY HAVE INVADED THE SPIRIT WORLD.
IF NOT FOR THIS CEASE FIRE AGREEMENT...

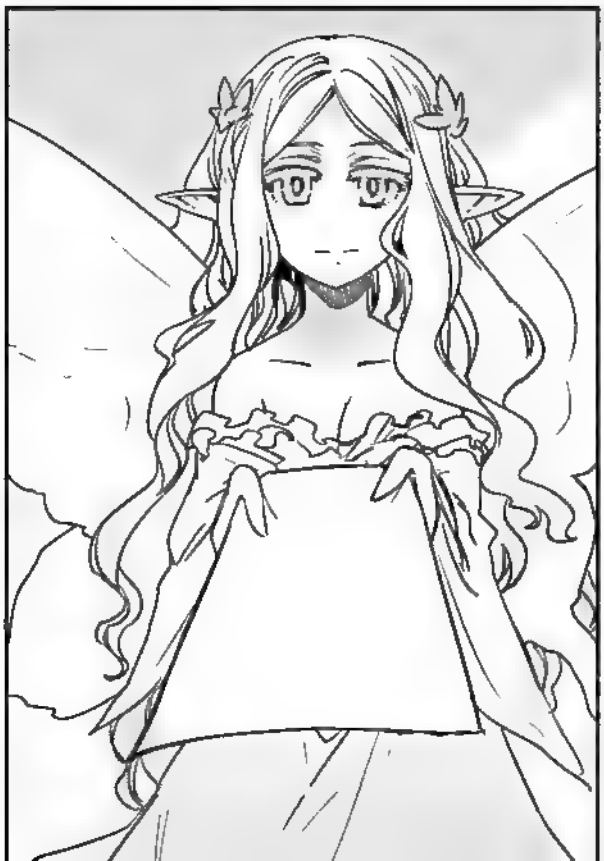

BECAUSE THIS SO-CALLED SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION HAS AGREED TO A CEASEFIRE WITH DEMONS...
...THE HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE MUST BE CAREFUL OF THE MOVEMENTS OF THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION.

...HAVE DONE THE EQUIVALENT OF DEFEATING 100,000 ENEMIES WITHOUT FIGHTING.
DUKE SILVER TIGER, THE GATEWAY CHIEF..
...THE DEMON QUEEN, AND FAIRY QUEEN...

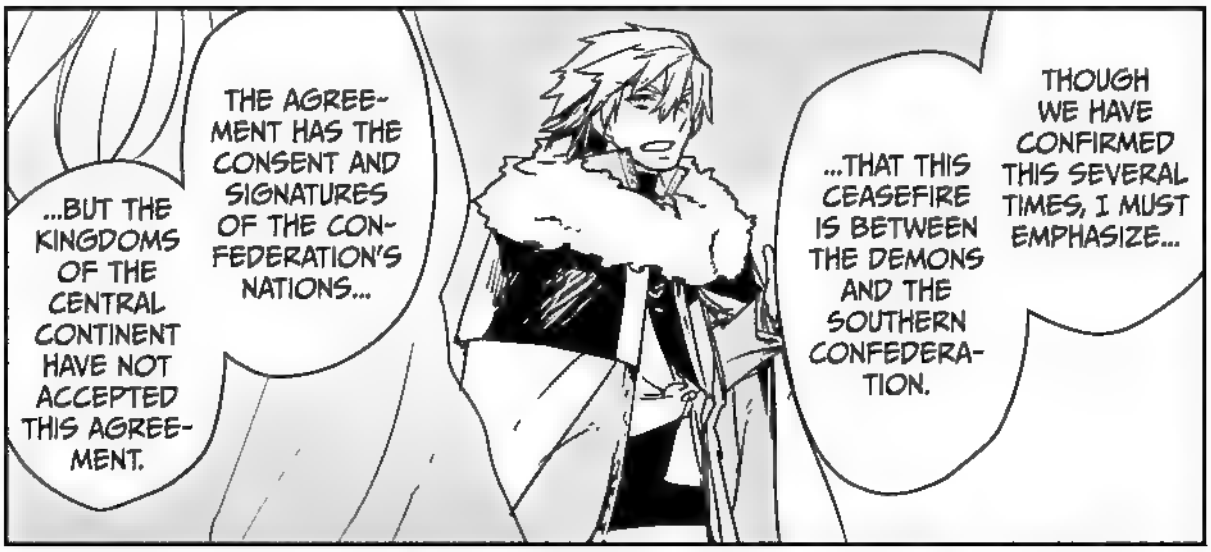
WE WILL HAVE TO PREPARE FOR WAR.
ARE WE CERTAIN WE WILL HAVE TO FIGHT THEM?
YES, BUT...
... 200,000 ...

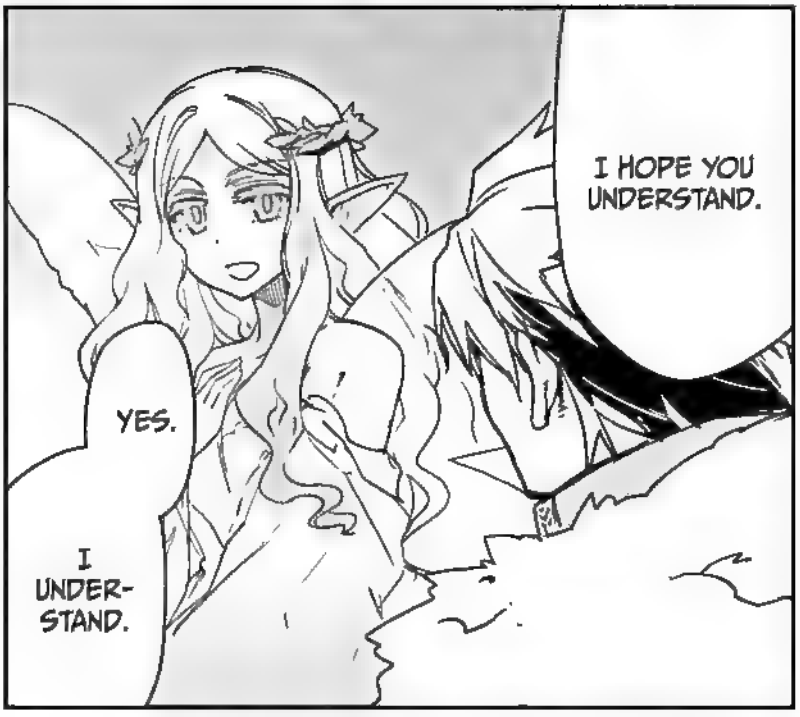
MURMUR
ざわっ…
WHAT? IT'S THAT POWERFUL?
OOH
おお…
THE FANGED DEMON ARMY SUFFERED MAJOR LOSSES AS WELL.
THE HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE WAS EQUIPPED WITH A NEW TYPE OF WEAPON CALLED A MUSKET.
THEY ARE INCREDIBLY POWERFUL AND ANNIHILATED THE BLUE DEMONS.
WE SHOULD STRENGTHEN OUR SURVEILLANCE AND PREPARE OUR ARMIES WHILE HANDLING OUR ROUTINE DUTIES.
YES.
BIZ
WE MUST PREPARE FOR WAR.
BIZ
IF YOU NOTICE ANYTHING ELSE...
...LET US KNOW IMMEDIATELY.
CLATTER

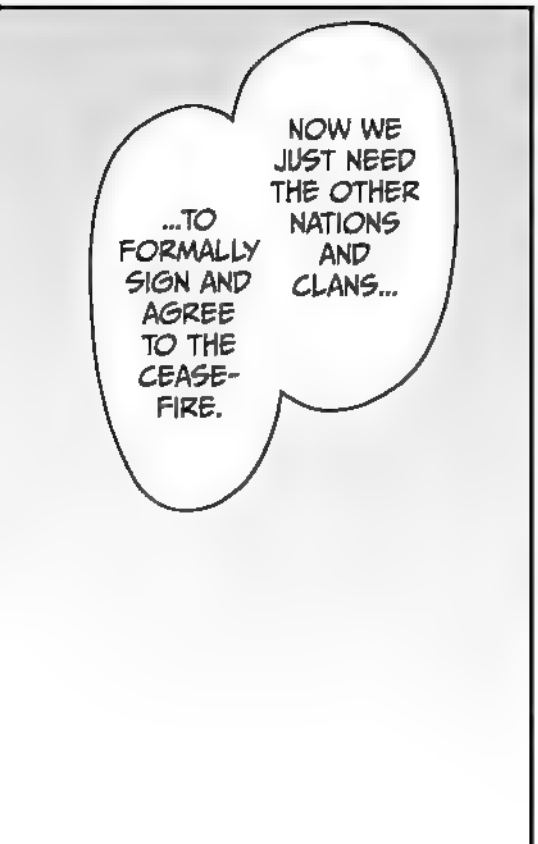




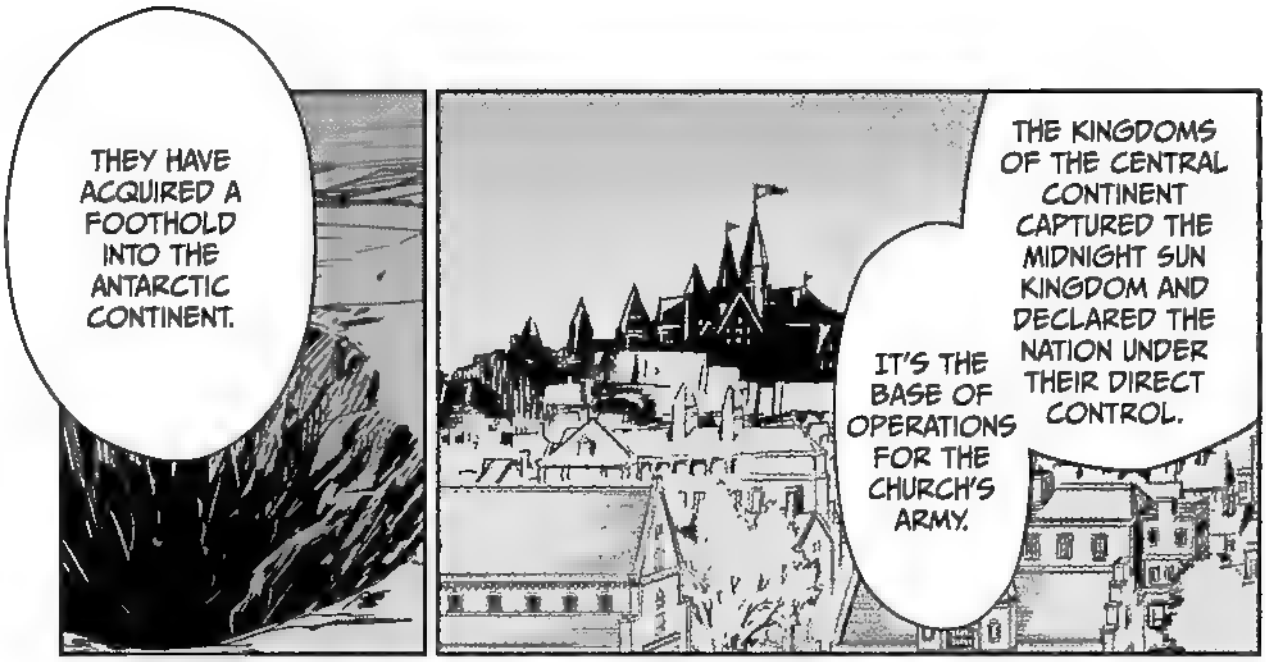
WE HAVE A TEMPORARY CEASEFIRE.
WE'VE TAKEN THE FIRST STEP TOWARD A PEACE TREATY.

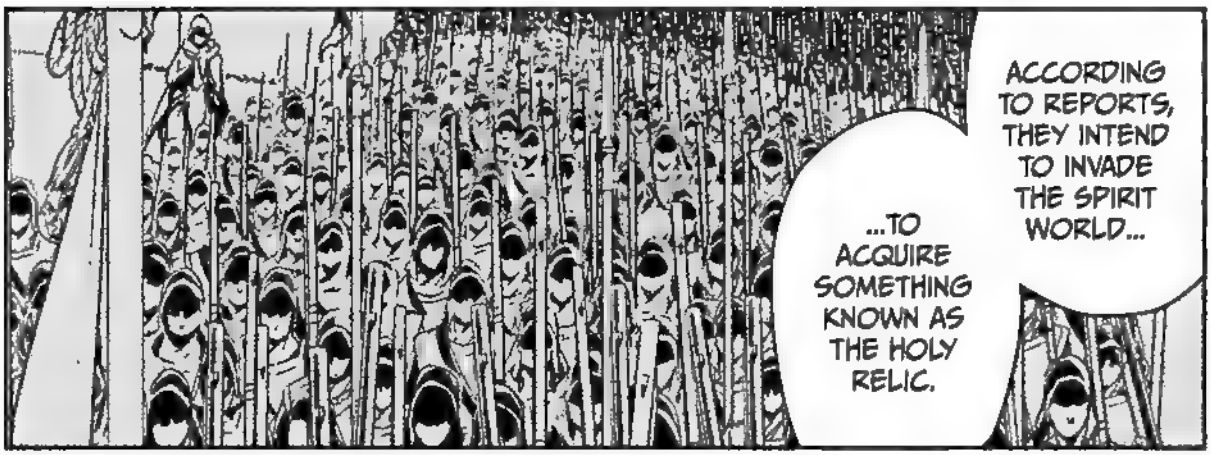

THOUGH WE HAVE CONFIRMED THIS SEVERAL TIMES, I MUST EMPHASIZE...
...THAT THIS CEASEFIRE IS BETWEEN THE DEMONS AND THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION.
THE AGREEMENT HAS THE CONSENT AND SIGNATURES OF THE CONFEDERATION'S NATIONS...
...BUT THE KINGDOMS OF THE CENTRAL CONTINENT HAVE NOT ACCEPTED THIS AGREEMENT.

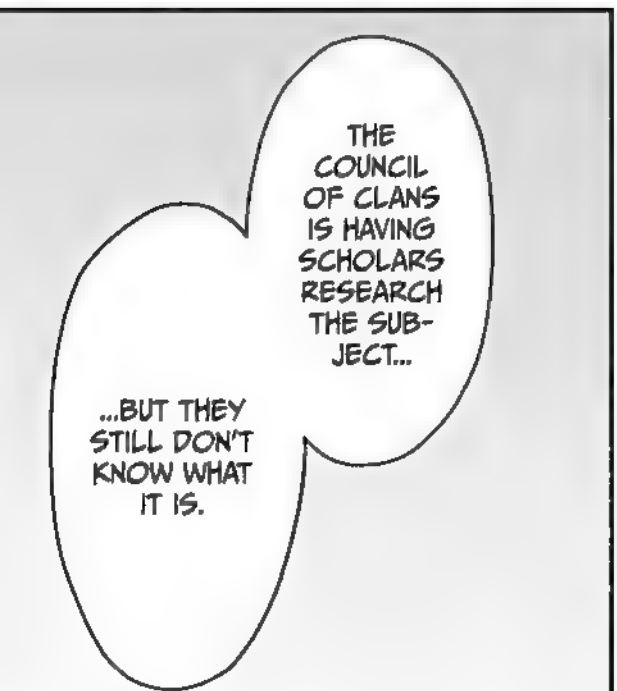

I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND.
YES.
I UNDERSTAND.


NOW WE JUST NEED THE OTHER NATIONS AND CLANS...
...TO FORMALLY SIGN AND AGREE TO THE CEASEFIRE.

BY THE WAY...
...WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT THE DEMON FORCES IN THE IRON KINGDOM?
I HOPE IT WORKS OUT.
IT SURE IS.
THIS SINGLE STEP IS A GREAT STEP FOR-WARD.
WE HAVE NO OBJEC-TIONS.
WHAT DOES THE CONFED-ERATION THINK?
...WE BELIEVE THEY SHOULD RETURN TO THE SPIRIT WORLD.
NOW THAT THE BLUE DEMONS HAVE FALLEN...
NOW THEN...
...THERE'S STILL MUCH TO DO.
WE HAVE A MOUNTAIN OF TASKS TO HANDLE.
OKAY.
THEN WE WILL INFORM THEM SHORTLY.


THEY HAVE ACQUIRED A FOOTHOLD INTO THE ANTARCTIC CONTINENT.
THE KINGDOMS OF THE CENTRAL CONTINENT CAPTURED THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM AND DECLARED THE NATION UNDER THEIR DIRECT CONTROL.
IT'S THE BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR THE CHURCH'S ARMY.

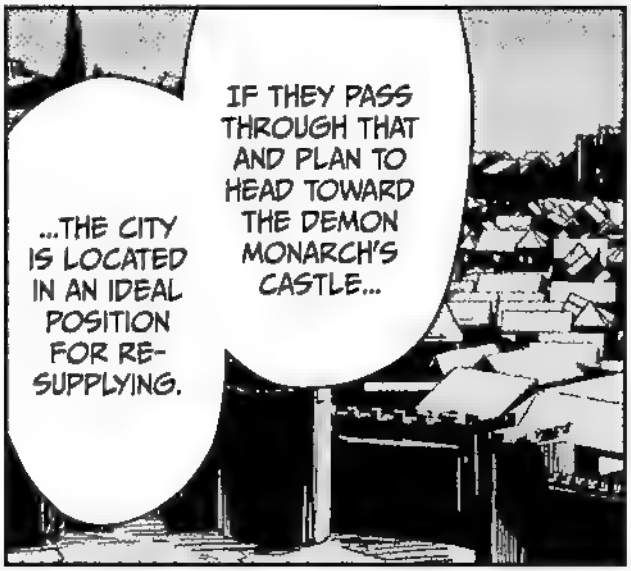

ACCORDING TO REPORTS, THEY INTEND TO INVADE THE SPIRIT WORLD...
...TO ACQUIRE SOMETHING KNOWN AS THE HOLY RELIC.

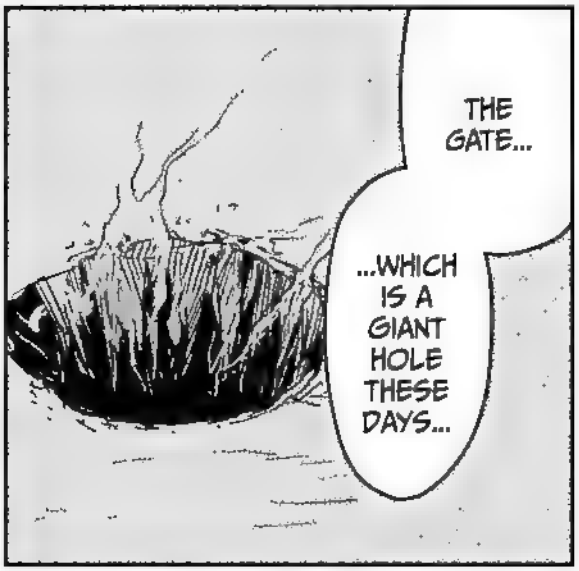

THE COUNCIL OF CLANS IS HAVING SCHOLARS RESEARCH THE SUB-JECT...
...BUT THEY STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS.

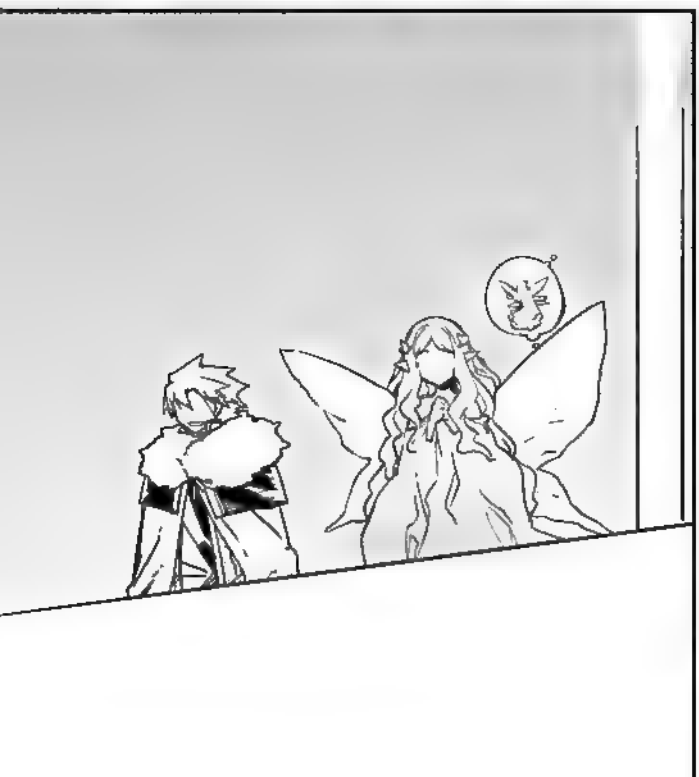
I HAVE HEARD ABOUT THIS.
I DO NOT KNOW WHAT THIS HOLY RELIC IS.

PERHAPS IT DOESN'T ACTUALLY EXIST.
IT COULD BE THE KINGDOMS OF THE CENTRAL CONTINENT SIMPLY WISHED TO EXPAND THEIR TERRITORY...
...AND SAW AN OPPORTUNITY TO INVADE THE SPIRIT WORLD WHICH SEEMS RICH WITH NEW POSSIBILITIES...
...FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE SURFACE WORLD.
THEY MAY HAVE FABRICATED THE HOLY RELIC AS A PRETEXT FOR THEIR INVASION.
IT IS SAD BUT POSSIBLE.

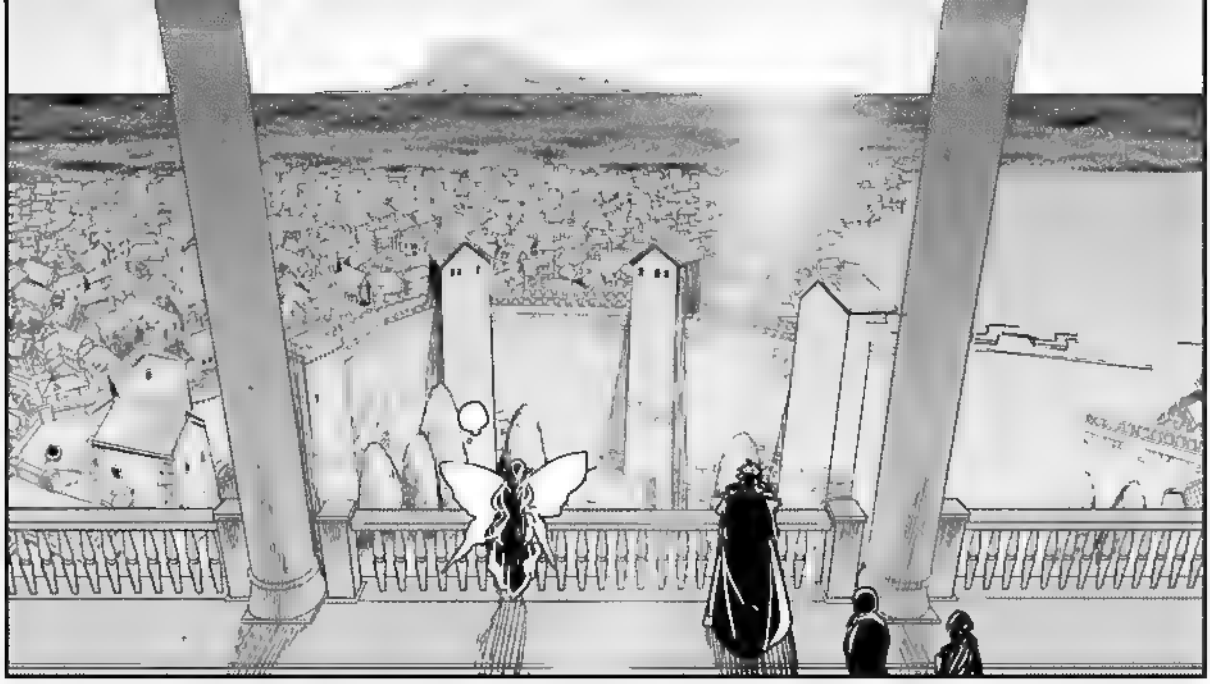
GATE-WAY CITY...
THEY PLAN TO ATTACK GATEWAY CITY AS WELL.

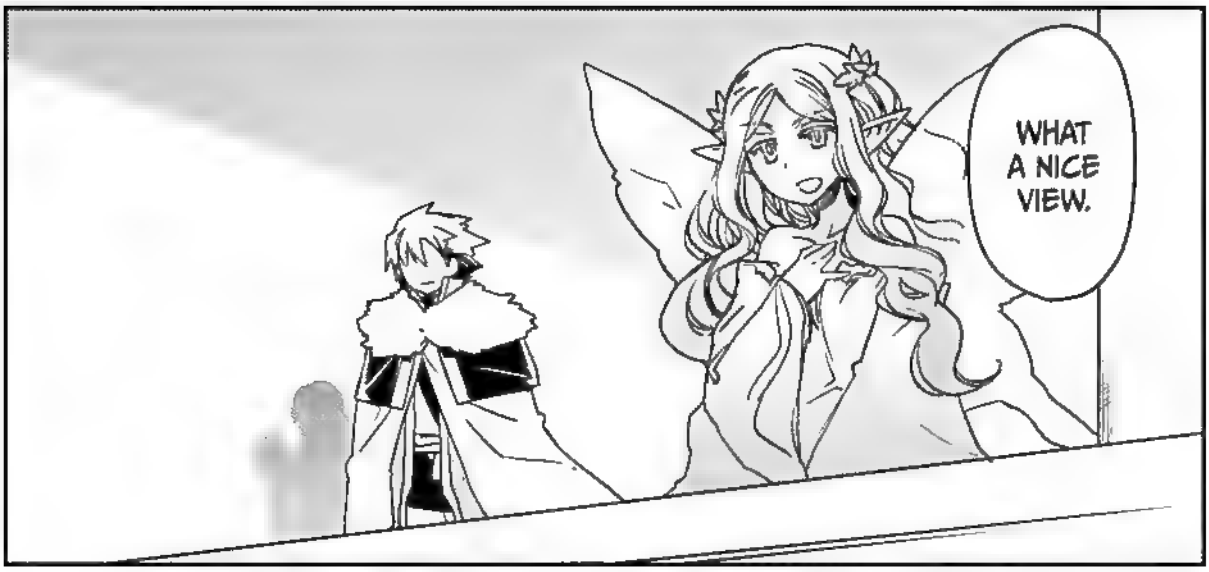

...THE CITY IS LOCATED IN AN IDEAL POSITION FOR RE-SUPPLYING.
IF THEY PASS THROUGH THAT AND PLAN TO HEAD TOWARD THE DEMON MONARCH'S CASTLE...


THE GATE...
...WHICH IS A GIANT HOLE THESE DAYS...



HOWEVER, IT'S NOT AS THOUGH THEY HAVE NO OTHER POTENTIAL TARGETS.
WE'RE NOT CERTAIN WHAT THEIR IN-TENTIONS ARE.



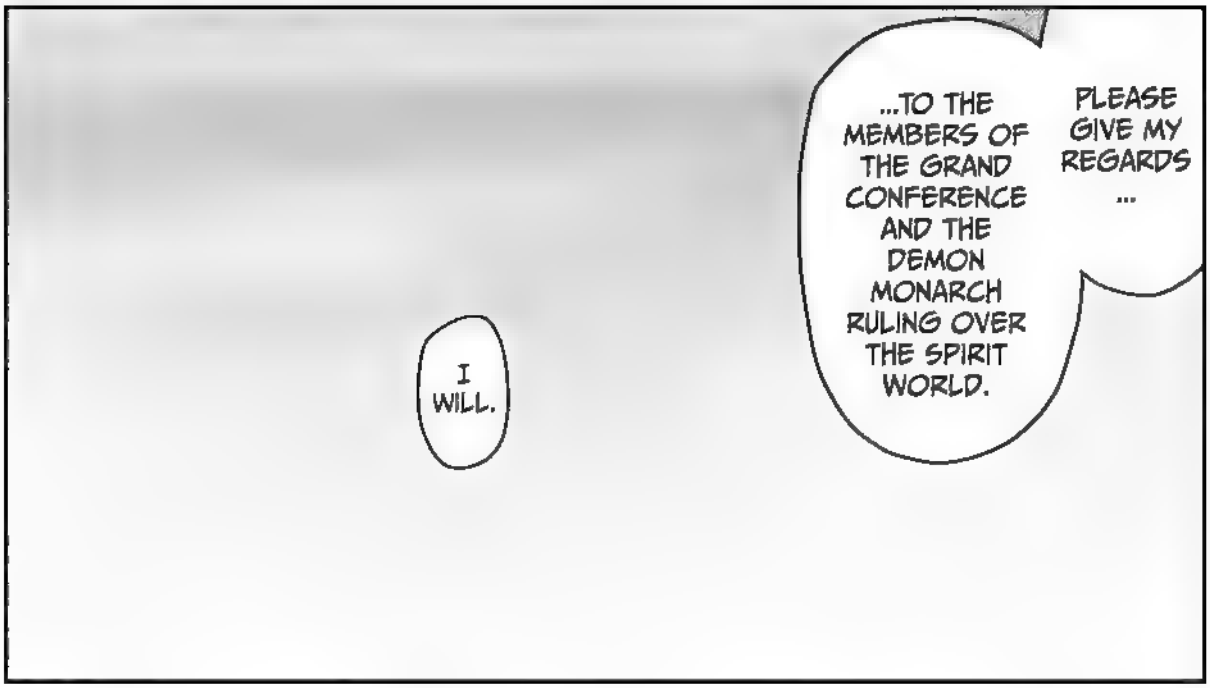

WHAT A NICE VIEW.

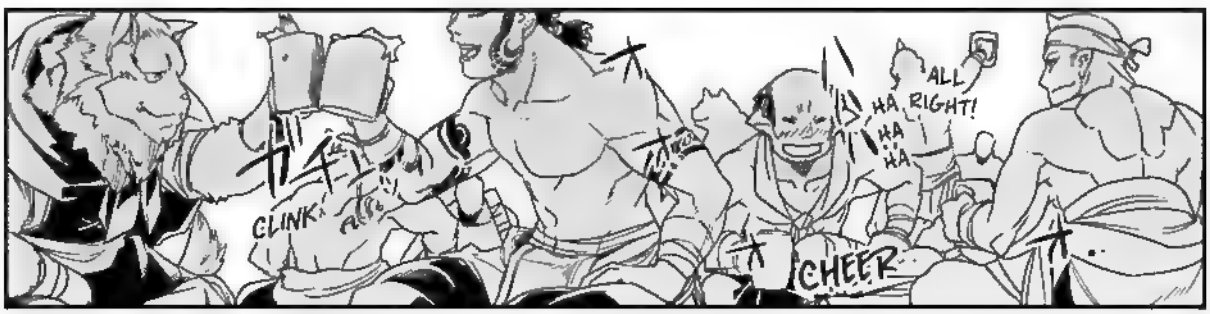
YES.
THAT'S AURORA ISLAND.
THE ISLAND THAT PASSED INTO DEMON HANDS AFTER THE PREVIOUS WAR...

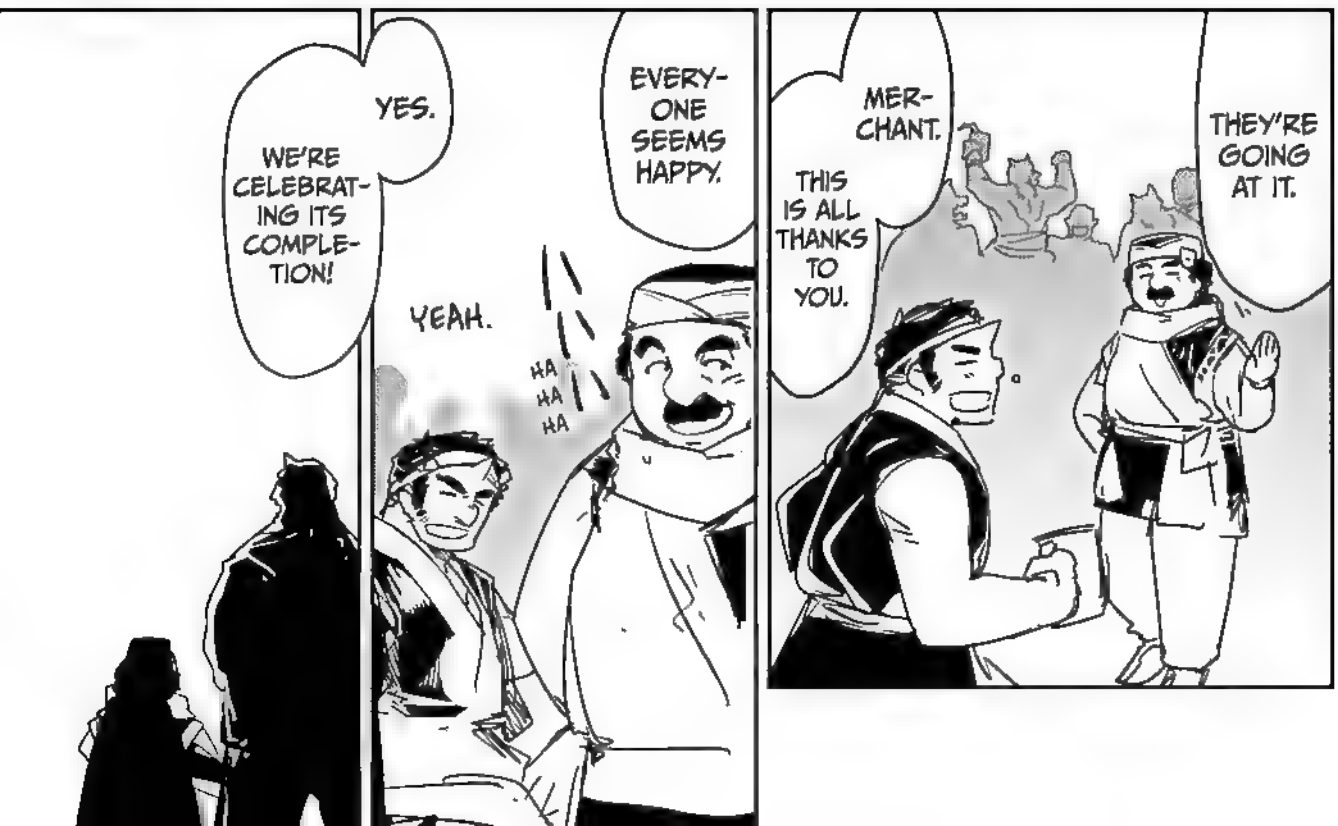
THAT ISLAND ...

LIKE THAT ISLAND, GATEWAY CITY...
...PASSED INTO HUMAN HANDS AFTER THE PREVIOUS WAR.
AT THE TIME, THE CLANS OF THE SPIRIT WORLD DISTRUSTED ONE ANOTHER...
...AND HAD MANY PROBLEMS WITH WORKING TOGETHER.
...
WE DO NOT DESIRE CONFLICT.
THE CURRENT CONFERENCE OF CLANS IS MORE UNIFIED THAN BEFORE.
IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE THE SAME THINGS WILL HAPPEN AGAIN.

THE FAIRIES ARE SMALL.
WE MAY HAVE MAGIC, BUT WE LACK COMBAT STRENGTH.
WE WOULD PREFER TO AVOID WARS.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
AVOIDING WAR WOULD BE BEST...
...BUT...
...AT THE SAME TIME, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE PEACE WITH-OUT ARMING OURSELVES.
NOW THAT SO MANY NATIONS AND NOBLES ARE INVOLVED...
...THE CHURCH AND HOLY KINGDOM CANNOT LEAVE WITHOUT ENGAGING IN BATTLE.


PLEASE GIVE MY REGARDS ...
...TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GRAND CONFERENCE AND THE DEMON MONARCH RULING OVER THE SPIRIT WORLD.
I WILL.


CLINK
ALL RIGHT!
HA HA HA
CHEER


YES.
WE'RE CELEBRATING ITS COMPLETION!
EVERYONE SEEMS HAPPY.
YEAH.
HA HA HA
MERCHANT.
THIS IS ALL THANKS TO YOU.
THEY'RE GOING AT IT.

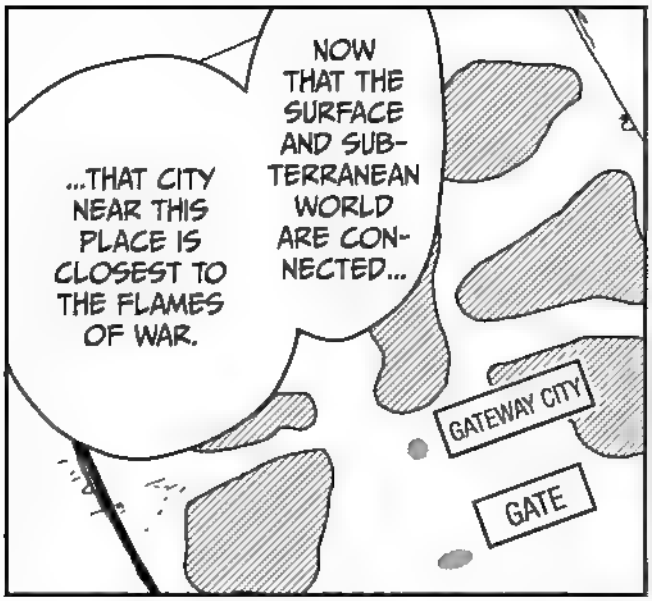
WE ADDED AN ADDITIONAL STONE BRIDGE TO THE ORIGINAL PLAN...
...AND TRIED TO MAKE IT AS SAFE TO CROSS AS POSSIBLE.
WE SHOULD COMPLETE THE LIFTS FOR TRANS-PORTING LUGGAGE SHORTLY.
THEY CAN BE CARRIED QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY BY "DROPPING" THEM BETWEEN GRAVITY AND THE REPULSIVE FORCE.

OH, UM...
YOU'RE EMBARRASSING ME.
YOU DID AN INCREDIBLE JOB.
THIS BRIDGE WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY.

...THERE IS SOMETHING I NEED YOU TO BUILD FIRST.

THOUGH I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU TO BUILD A GREAT HIGHWAY...
...OVER EIGHT YEARS THROUGH THIS GIANT CAVE AS WE PLANNED...

IS IT...
...WALLS?


NOW THAT THE SURFACE AND SUB-TERRANEAN WORLD ARE CON-NECTED...
...THAT CITY NEAR THIS PLACE IS CLOSEST TO THE FLAMES OF WAR.
GATEWAY CITY
GATE

THE FIRST TIME I VISITED GATEWAY CITY...
...I KNEW IT HAD SEEN MANY WARS.

I ACCEPT.
FRANKLY
YOU MAY NOT BE SATISFIED BY HOW MUCH THE JOB PAYS.
THIS REQUEST ISN'T FROM THE ALLI-ANCE.

I'M GOING TO CROSS THIS BRIDGE AND COME BACK.
I NEED TO GO GET EVERYONE.

YES.
ARE YOU SURE?
YOU DIDN'T EVEN HESITATE.

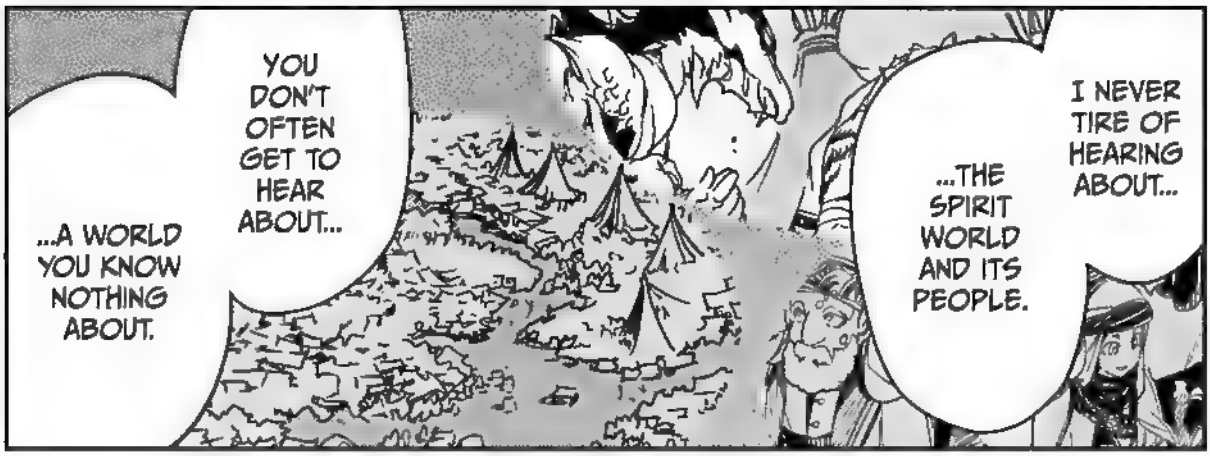
BESIDES, YOU WANT WALLS, RIGHT?
IT'S THE PERFECT JOB TO DEMONSTRATE WHAT I LEARNED FROM MY MASTER.
THE BRIDGE MAY BE FINISHED, BUT I NEED SOMEWHERE TO WAIT FOR HER.

SHRIEK キャ
SHRIEK キャ
HA HA HA!
WHAT AN ENER-GETIC CHILD!
NERVOUS

HEY!
DON'T BOTHER HIM TOO MUCH.
YOUR BEARD IS SO FLUFFY.

PLEASE EXCUSE THE IN-TRUSION.
YOU'RE NOT TIRED OF THIS YET?

HEY.
YOU'RE BACK.


...A WORLD YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT.
YOU DON'T OFTEN GET TO HEAR ABOUT...
...THE SPIRIT WORLD AND ITS PEOPLE.
I NEVER TIRE OF HEARING ABOUT...

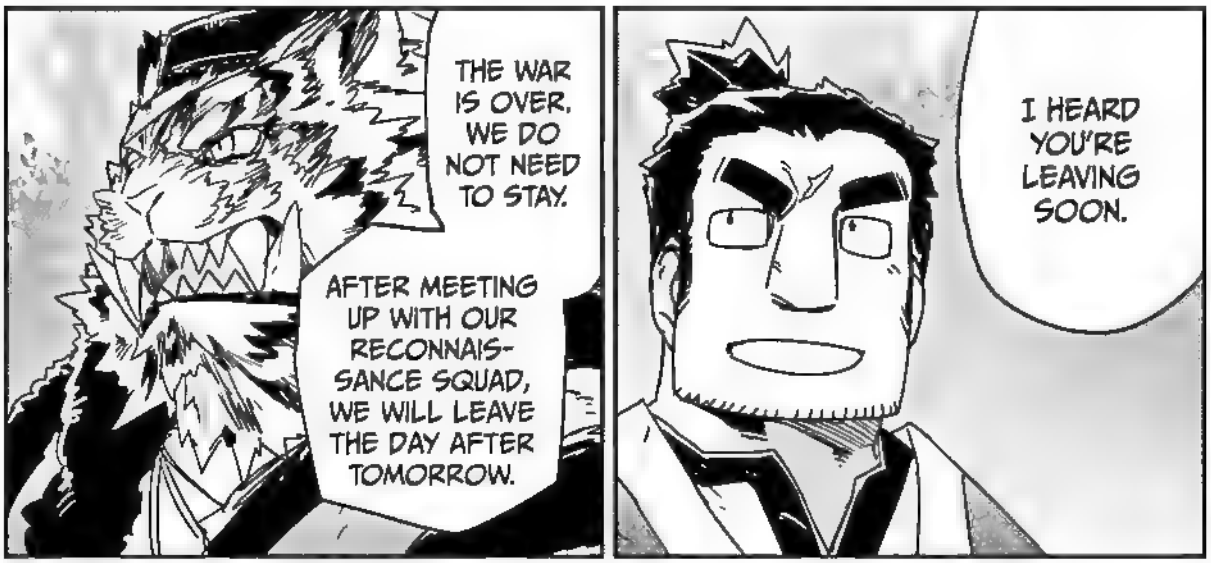
HELLO.
SHE IS LIKE A YOUNGER SISTER TO ME

OH?
WHO'S THIS GIRL?

GIFTS?
I BROUGHT YOU GIFTS!
WE MET SOMEWHERE STRANGE BEFORE.
AT THE HOT SPRINGS INN.
WHAT?
GULP...
ROAR
RUMBLE
EAT UP.
STEAM
STEAM
ROAR

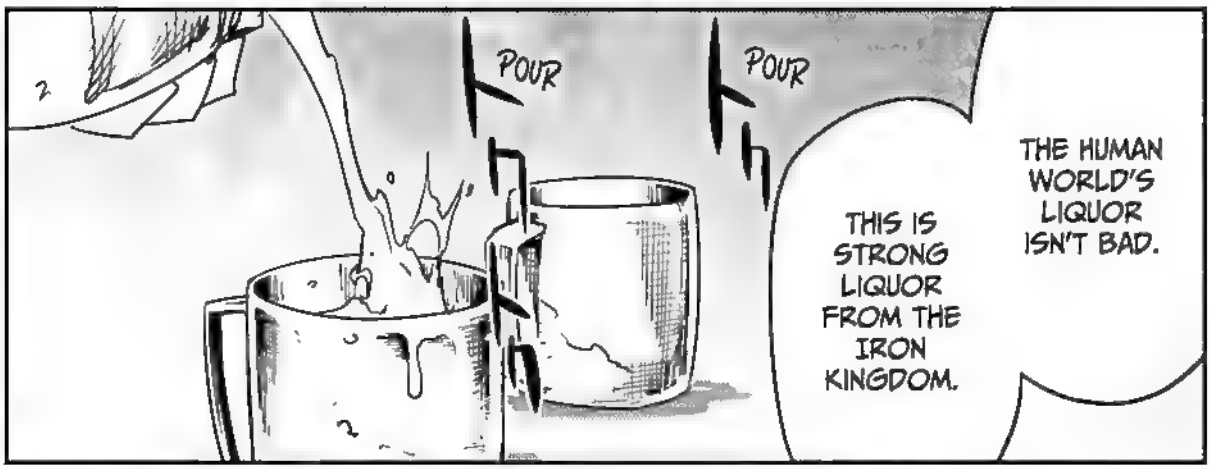
WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS?
おおぉおお
ROAR
おおぉぉお
THE FLAVORS...
IT'S DELI-CIOUS!
SUCH MILD FLAVORS
IT'S DELI-CIOUS!
ooh
おおお、
THE JUICES...
ROAR
IT'S DELI-CIOUS!
IT MELTS IN YOUR MOUTH!
DELICIOUS!
IT TASTES SO GOOD!
IT'S DELI-CIOUS!
YOU BROUGHT US FOOD?
IT'S GOOD. HAVE AS MUCH AS YOU'D LIKE.

CHOMP
ガブ
SHE IS A SPECIAL GIRL.
EVEN THOUGH SHE'S A LITTLE GIRL...
...SHE'S NOT AFRAID.


THE WAR IS OVER. WE DO NOT NEED TO STAY.
AFTER MEETING UP WITH OUR RECONNAIS-SANCE SQUAD, WE WILL LEAVE THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW.
I HEARD YOU'RE LEAVING SOON.

SPLISH
チャ
I SEE.
RUSTLE
ゴソ

WE MUST SHARE A DRINK BEFORE THEN.
I WON'T LET YOU LEAVE UNTIL WE DO.


POUR
POUR
THE HUMAN WORLD'S LIQUOR ISN'T BAD.
THIS IS STRONG LIQUOR FROM THE IRON KINGDOM.

THE LAND, HUH?
THOUGH IT'S NOT VERY ELEGANT, IT IS THIS LAND'S LIQUOR.

I'VE HEARD THE SPIRIT WORLD HAS NO MOON.
AH.
YOU MEAN THAT WHITE THING?
IT'S DIFFER-ENT FROM THE GENTLE GLOW OF THE SPIRIT WORLD'S NIGHTTIME SUN...
...BUT THE MOON MAKES A GOOD ACCOMPA-NIMENT TO DRINKING.
CLINK

I AM SHARING A DRINK WITH A WARRIOR FROM A DISTANT LAND!
TONIGHT WE WILL DRINK UNTIL THE MOON SETS!
WELL ?
HOW DID IT FEEL TO LEAD THAT ARMY?
STEP
I HAVE BROUGHT THE BLUE ASH KING!
I SEE.

IT WASN'T BAD.
THE BLUE ASH KING
IT'S INTER-ESTING.
INTER-ESTING, HUH?

HONESTLY SPEAKING, SERFS UNPREPARED FOR WAR...
...ARE NOTHING MORE THAN SERFS.
THEY ARE SELFISH COWARDS.
IN THE WARS FOUGHT BY NOBLE ARMIES UNTIL NOW...
...I HAVE BEEN RESTRICTED BY THE FACT THAT MY FORCES CONSISTED OF NOBLES.
I REALIZED THAT WEAKNESS IN THIS BATTLE.
UNLIKE THE PRIVATE ARMIES OF NOBLES, THEY ARE HONEST FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE.
HOWEVER...
...THAT MAKES THEM INTERESTING.
THEY ARE LIKE POWERFUL CROSSBOWS.
HOWEVER...
...I FEEL AS THOUGH THEY HAVE MANY WEAKNESSES.
WHAT ABOUT THE MUSKETS?

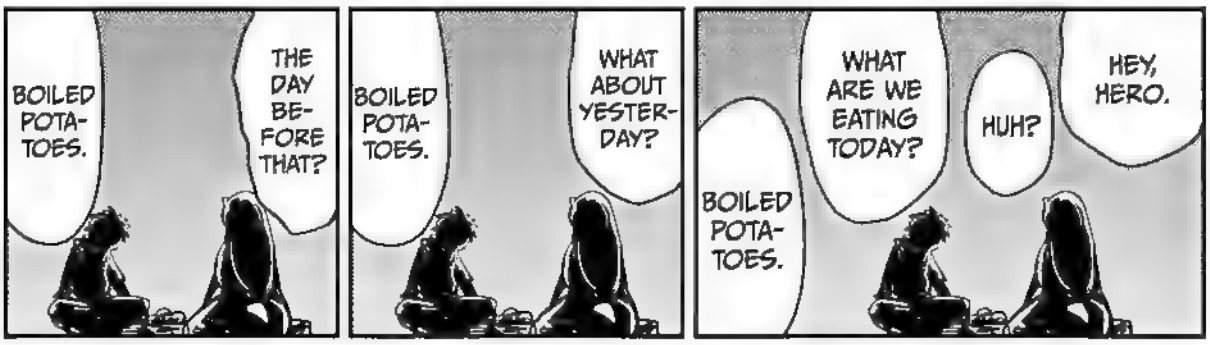
THE FIRST OF OUR CURRENT PROB-LEMS...
...IS THE FOCUS OF OUR ATTACKS.
THIS REFERS TO BOTH...
...FOCUSING ATTACKS ON A SINGLE POINT ON A BROAD BATTLE-FIELD...
...AND FOCUSING ATTACKS IN A SINGLE MOMENT...
...ACROSS A LONG PERIOD OF TIME.
WE HAVE NEITHER OF THESE.
THE SECOND PROBLEM IS OUR DEFENSES.
ONCE A MUSKET FIRES ONE SHOT, IT'S OVER.
THEY SUFFER A MARKED DECLINE IN DEFENSE FROM THE MOMENT THEY ARE DISCHARGED UNTIL THEY'RE ABLE TO RELOAD.
AS YOU SUGGESTED, THIS PROB-LEM CAN BE RESOLVED...
...BY CO-ORDINATING THEIR MOVE-MENTS WITH SPEARMEN.

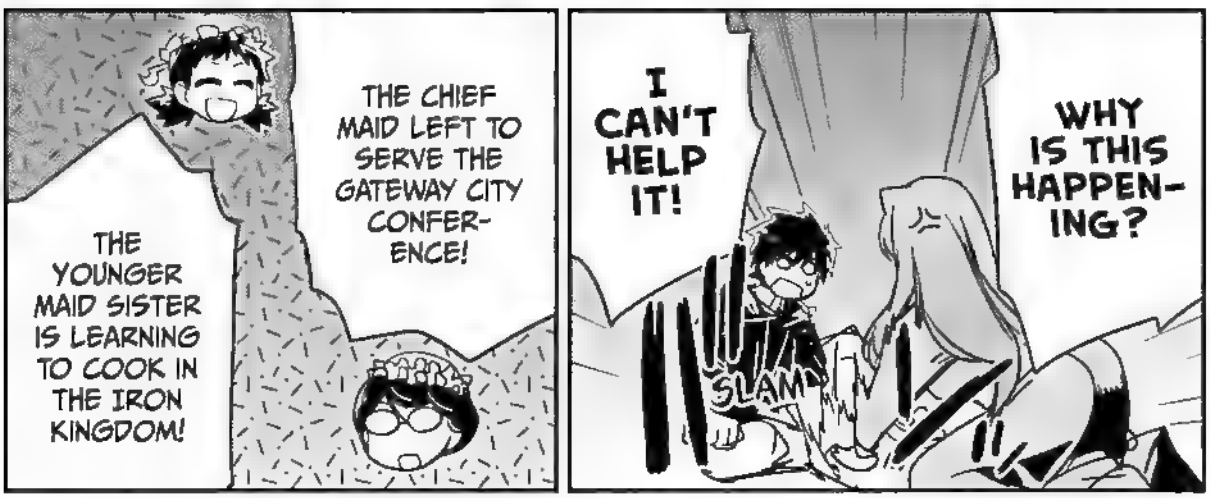
WHAT ELSE?
THERE IS EVEN MORE FRICTION BETWEEN THE NOBLES AND SERFS THAN WE EXPECTED.
THE MUSKET-MEN PRIMARILY CONSIST-ING OF SERFS...
...BELIEVE THEY ARE THE MAIN FORCE OF THE ARMY.
THE NOBLES AND THEIR KNIGHTS HOLD THE SERFS IN CONTEMPT.
I BELIEVE OUR MILITARY DISCIPLINE MUST BE IMPROVED.
VERY WELL.
THROUGH COMMANDING THIS BATTLE, I LEARNED THE RANGE, TIMING, AND TENDENCIES OF THE MUSKET.
MY COMMAND ON THE FRONT LINE WILL BE EVEN MORE SOUND IN THE FUTURE.

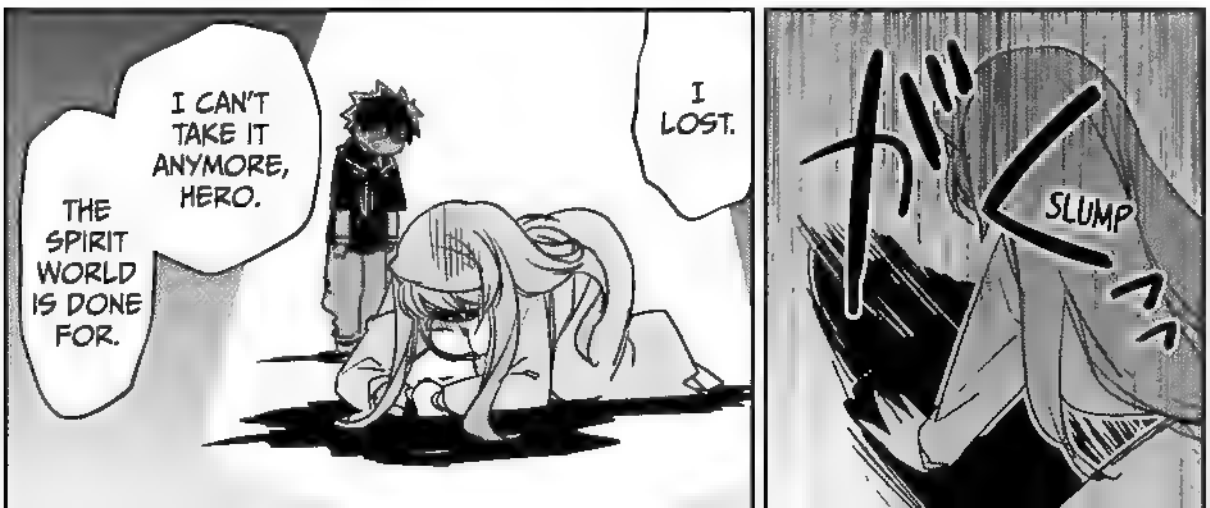
I SAW THE REAL HERO ONCE LONG AGO.
HE IS A MONSTER.
SURELY YOU JEST.
I WOULDN'T EXPECT LESS FROM THE YOUNG KING OF THE MIST KINGDOM.
IN BETTER TIMES, PERHAPS THEY WOULD HAVE CALLED YOU THE HERO.
WHERE IS HE NOW?
WHO ... KNOWS ...?

SPRINKLE
SPRINKLE
DEMON QUEEN, PASS THE SALT.
HERE.
PLUNK

モキュ
CHEW
CHEW
モキュ
CHEW
モキュ
CHEW
モキュ


BOILED POTA-TOES.
THE DAY BE-FORE THAT?
BOILED POTA-TOES.
WHAT ABOUT YESTER-DAY?
BOILED POTA-TOES.
WHAT ARE WE EATING TODAY?
HUH?
HEY, HERO.


THE YOUNGER MAID SISTER IS LEARNING TO COOK IN THE IRON KINGDOM!
THE CHIEF MAID LEFT TO SERVE THE GATEWAY CITY CONFER-ENCE!
I CAN'T HELP IT!
SLAM
WHY IS THIS HAPPEN-ING?


THE SPIRIT WORLD IS DONE FOR.
I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE, HERO.
I LOST.
SLUMP

CLATTER
YOU'RE SKIP-PING AHEAD!
THREE THOUSAND YEARS PASSED.
THREE THOUSAND YEARS PASSED.
FINE.
YOU'RE HOPE-LESS.
SCREAM
I'M THE DEMON QUEEN!
THEY MAY BE GOOD, BUT I GET SICK OF EATING THEM EVERY DAY!
STEAM
STEAM
BUT WE'RE DELI-CIOUS.
MY BODY AND MIND CAN'T FUNCTION ON THIS FOOD!
GATEWAY CITY
CHATTER
CHATTER
HA HA HA
HA HA HA

I'D ALSO LIKE ABOUT FOUR DISHES OF WHATEVER YOU RECOMMEND..
HEY.
COULD I GET TWO COLD ALES?
CLATTER
WHY, IF IT ISN'T THE BLACK KNIGHT.
I'VE NEVER BEEN SOME-WHERE SO LIVELY...
...AND FUN.
WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU SEEM OUT OF IT.

THAT FANGED DEMON CAME FROM THE FOREST TO SELL FURS.
HE LOOKS OLD ENOUGH TO BE OUT ON HIS OWN.
WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE THEY'RE DISCUSS-ING?
ALL KINDS OF STUFF.
LOOK.

HE SEEMS HAPPY.
HE MUST HAVE SOLD THEM AT A GOOD PRICE.
ONCE HE TAKES HIS PROFITS BACK TO HIS VILLAGE, HE'LL BE A FULL ADULT.
HE CAN SEEK MAR-RIAGE.

I KNOW ABOUT THE FANGED DEMON RITE YOU'RE DESCRIBING...
...BUT...
...I'VE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE.
I SEE.
THANKS FOR WAITING!
THUNK
CLATTER
CLUNK

DROOL

CHOMP
CHOMP
IT'S LIKE THE LEGENDARY BATTLE BETWEEN THE DEMON QUEEN AND HERO
RUMBLE
WHOA!

IT'S INCREDIBLE.
MY HEART IS OVERFLOWING WITH EMOTIONS.
IT'S A TAVERN. THAT'S WHAT YOU'D EXPECT.
THEY'RE LAUGHING WITH GLOWING FACES.
EVERYONE SEEMS TO BE HAVING FUN.
YES.
IT WAS DELICIOUS.
BLACK KNIGHT'S COMPANION.
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OUR FOOD?
YOU ATE QUITE A'LOT.
THANK YOU.

THIS MAN IS THE BLACK KNIGHT DIRECTLY SERVING THE DEMON QUEEN!
HE'S OUR MOST HONOR-ABLE REGULAR!
GET THE WINE!
POUR EACH OF THESE TWO A GLASS!
O-KAY!
WHAT?
IS THE DEMON QUEEN ALL RIGHT?
I HEARD SHE COL-LAPSED AT THE KURULTAI!
THANKS TO HER, WE'VE REMAINED IN BUSINESS!
WE'RE GRATE-FUL TO THE DEMON QUEEN!
THE BLACK KNIGHT?
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S HERE!
MURMUR
CLATTER
ALL RIGHT.
HUH?
UMM...
UH...

CHEER
I AM THE KNIGHT WHO DIRECTLY SERVES THE DEMON QUEEN!
I AM THE BLACK KNIGHT, SWORD OF THE SPIRIT WORLD!
LISTEN UP, EVERYONE!
STEP
THOUGH THE DEMON QUEEN FELL TO A VILLAIN'S ARROW...
...DON'T WORRY!
HER WOUND HAS HEALED COMPLETELY...
...AND IS SITTING IN HER CASTLE RIGHT NOW WORKING TO ACHIEVE PEACE AND PROSPERITY FOR THE ENTIRE SPIRIT WORLD!
LOOK AT GATEWAY CITY, A PLACE DIRECTLY UNDER HER RULE!
HUMANS AND DEMONS CAN ENJOY FRIENDLY DRINKS AND ARGUMENTS TOGETHER!

I'LL PAY FOR YOUR FIRST ROUND!
RAISE YOUR CUPS, EVERY-ONE!
BAR-KEEP!
POUR EVERYONE A ROUND ON ME!
SURE THING!

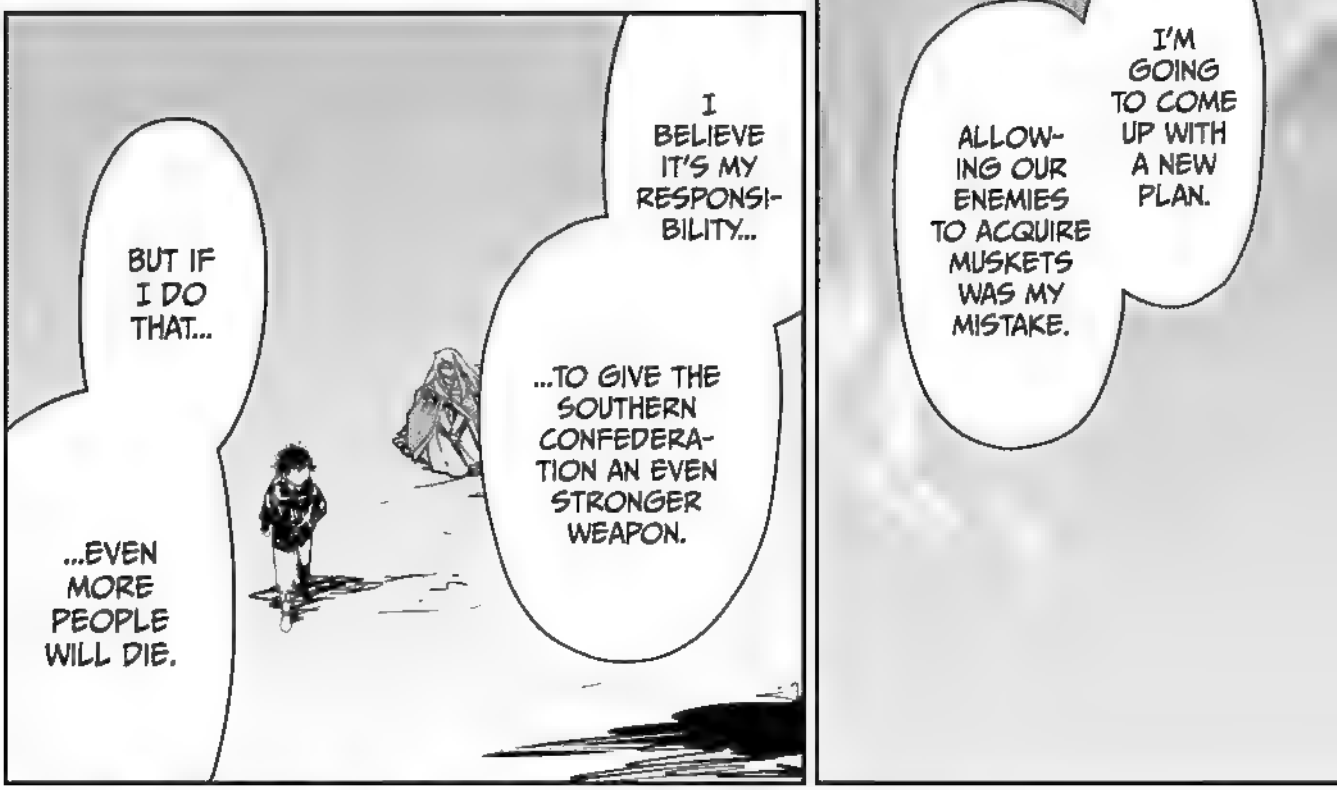
LET'S TOAST TO THE DEMON QUEEN!
SHE MAY BE A WEAK FIGHTER...
...BUT NO ONE CARES FOR HER PEOPLE MORE THAN HER!
LET'S DRINK TO THE STRENGTH OF THE DEMON QUEEN!

CHEERS!

MAY PEACE PREVAIL FOR-EVER!
GLORY TO THE DEMON QUEEN!
LONG LIVE THE DEMON QUEEN!
CHEERS!
FOR THE DEMON QUEEN!
CHEERS!

ARE YOU OKAY?
WE CAN TELE-PORT SOON.
I CAN'T.
IF WE TELE-PORT NOW, I'M DONE FOR.
MY DIGNITY AS THE DEMON QUEEN, MY MAIDENLY IMAGE, AND MY RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU WILL ALL END.
IT CAN'T BE THAT BAD
URP

THE WIND FEELS NICE.
YEAH.
WE CAN'T LOSE.


I'M GOING TO COME UP WITH A NEW PLAN.
ALLOWING OUR ENEMIES TO ACQUIRE MUSKETS WAS MY MISTAKE.
I BELIEVE IT'S MY RESPONSIBILITY...
...TO GIVE THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERATION AN EVEN STRONGER WEAPON.
BUT IF I DO THAT...
...EVEN MORE PEOPLE WILL DIE.

BUT THAT HESITATION...
MY HESITATION TO SPREAD GUNPOWDER ...
...ALLOWED OUR ENEMIES TO MASS-PRODUCE MUSKETS.
I AM NOTHING.
THOUGH I ARROGANTLY LECTURE YOU...
...I WAS THE ONE WHO WAS LEAST PREPARED.

I AM REMIND-ED...
...AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ALONE.
I SHOULD'VE TOLD THE FEMALE KNIGHT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.
IF I HAD TOLD HER ABOUT THE MUSKETS...
...FEWER PEOPLE MAY HAVE DIED.
I AM OVER IT.
I WILL NOT RUN FROM THIS ANYMORE.

COME.
ONCE WE GET HOME, WE'LL START OVER...

YEAH.

...SO WE CAN SEE THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT HILL.

I HAVE A LOT FOR YOU TO DO TOO.
LEAVE IT TO ME.

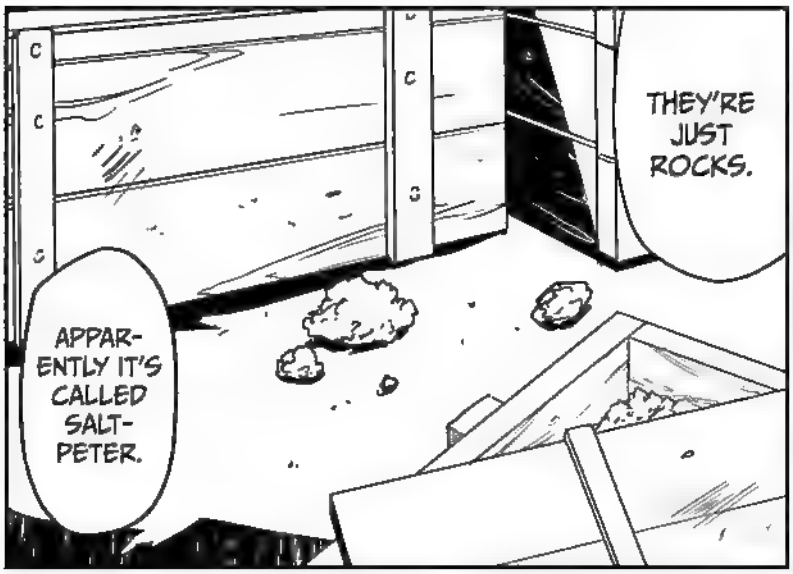
ONE OF THE CENTRAL ARMY'S COMPANIES IS COMING THIS WAY!
THEY'VE GOT MUSKETS WITH THEM!
CHATTER

HEY!
THIS ISN'T GOOD!
RUSTLE

PANT
PANT
RUSTLE

BUT THOSE THINGS THE NOBLE ASKED US TO HOLD ONTO...
THAT'S TERRIBLE NEWS!
LET'S RUN!

...FINE FOR A DAY OR TWO.
WE SHOULD BE...
HOW SOON WILL THEY BE HERE?


APPARENTLY IT'S CALLED SALTPETER.
THEY'RE JUST ROCKS.

RUSTLE

BUT WE CAN'T STAND AGAINST AN ARMY!
THIS SALTPETER IS RELATED TO THE SECRET BEHIND OUR ENEMIES' FIRE-SPITTING TUBES.
THAT MUST BE WHY THE NOBLE WANTED TO HIDE IT.

WHO'S THERE?
CLINK
CLANK

BRO-THER!
わあっ
CHATTER
SIR.
HEY.
THANKS FOR WATCHING MY STUFF.
THAT'S TER-RIBLE NEWS.
NOW THEN ...
WE CAN'T RUN WHILE CARRYING THESE GOODS!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
CHATTER
THE CENTRAL ARMY HAS SNIFFED US OUT!
CHATTER
?
WHAT SHALL WE DO...
...SUC-CES-SOR?
TURN

YEAH.
THIS COMPANY CAN'T BE WITHOUT A CAPTAIN FOREVER.
SUC-CES-SOR?
?

SHE'S YOUR NEW CAPTAIN.

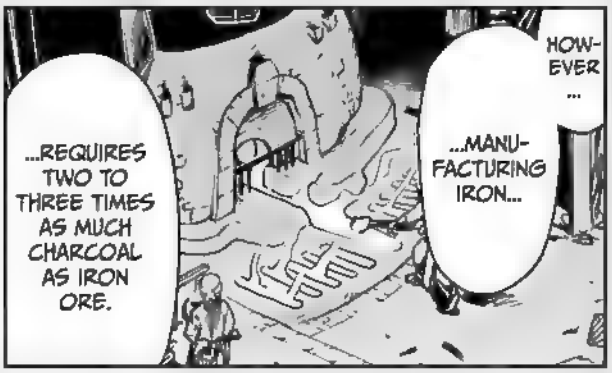
RUSTLE
THE END
CHAPTER 40
We Can't Lose

IRON MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY

Iron, which is used to a variety of purposes, it essential to humans. The iron manufacturing technology used to create it progressed with increases in demand.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRON MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY FORCED BY NECESSITY

Humans have used many metals for practical use. The most familiar of these metals is iron.



Manufacturing iron consumes massive quantities of charcoal. When blast furnaces first appeared, five tons of charcoal was required to manufacture each ton of iron.

Though the same can be said for all metals, metals with fewer impurities (high purity) have a higher melting point (the temperature at which it begins to melt) and are softer. In the case of iron, the various types have differing names based on the amount of charcoal they use. From most to least, they are cast iron, copper, and wrought iron. The various types of iron are used for different purposes. Cast iron is used to make pots and pans, copper is used to make industrial materials, and wrought iron is used to make nails and wire.

Early iron manufacturing processes involved creating a 1m tall and 10cm wide furnace in an area with good ventilation such as a hillside and placing iron ore and charcoal inside. Because iron ore is composed primarily of iron oxide, by adding charcoal and heating the components, the oxygen in the iron oxide binds to the carbon instead. In other words, the iron is extracted though a chemical reaction.

After heating the ore for a certain amount of time, the furnace is destroyed to remove the half-melted piece of iron, and the metal is hammered to remove impurities. The more impurities the ore contains, the lower its melting point, and only half the ore needs to be melted, making it possible to manufacture ore even in a small furnace. The iron manufactured in this manner is cast iron. A blacksmith's job is to reheat and refine the iron into copper and mold it into tools. After the invention of bellows, human strength was used to create airflow, but the basic construction remained the same.

The Holy Kingdom manufactured iron and muskets in the same location. They must have created new specialized facilities.

As the technology spread, the demand for iron increased, but the existing method could only produce a few kilograms of iron. Blast furnaces were created to produce even more iron at once, and ventilation systems using waterwheels were born. A blast furnace is a tall furnace. Multiple layers of iron ore and charcoal could be placed inside a blast furnace, and the temperature inside the furnace also increased, allowing workers to handle liquefied iron.

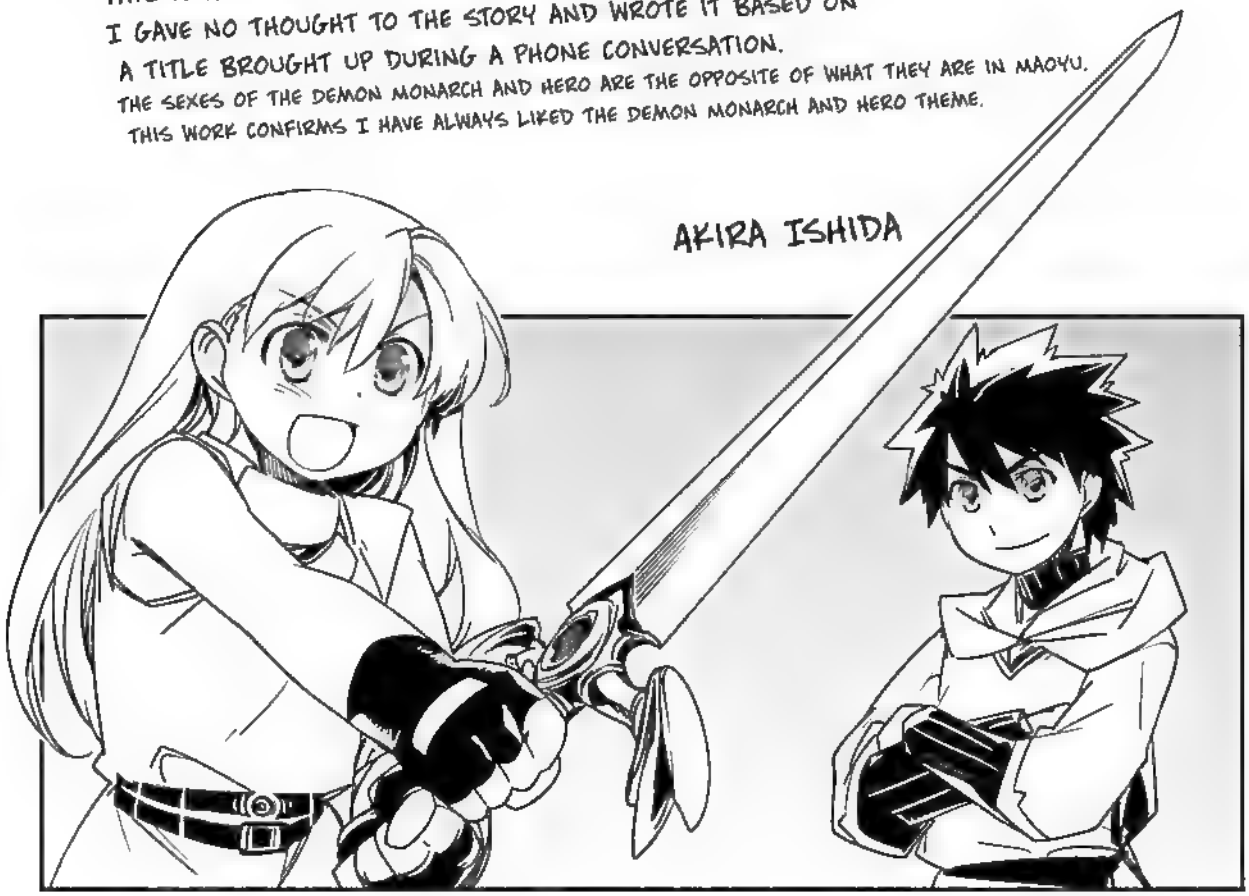
However, as iron production increased, so did charcoal consumption. In Europe, deforestation had exhausted timber resources, so the plentiful supply of coal was used instead.

However, the sulfur contained in coal weakened the iron, leading to the development of a type of distilled coal known as coke, an new furnaces were designed. In this manner, each time a problem arose, a new invention appeared. The process has been improved multiple times until today.

LEVEL HERO!

THIS IS A MAOYU MANGA AKIRA ISHIDA WROTE ROUGHLY 15 YEARS AGO.
I GAVE NO THOUGHT TO THE STORY AND WROTE IT BASED ON
A TITLE BROUGHT UP DURING A PHONE CONVERSATION.
THE SEXES OF THE DEMON MONARCH AND HERO ARE THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT THEY ARE IN MAOYU.
THIS WORK CONFIRMS I HAVE ALWAYS LIKED THE DEMON MONARCH AND HERO THEME.

AKIRA ISHIDA



Back after 15 years -- A reprinting of Akira Ishida's short story.
Enjoy a sweet adventure slightly different from Maoyu!

I CAN'T HELP IT.
SHE ONLY MENTIONS MY LEVELS WHEN I'M AT HOME.
YOINK
DID YOU LEVEL UP?
I CAN'T LEVEL UP THAT QUICKLY!
MOM
BUT YOU HAVE TO RAISE YOUR LEVEL IF YOU WANT PEOPLE TO RESPECT YOU.
YOU'RE A HERO. THEY'RE EXPECTING A LOT FROM YOU.
ENA LAHR
(11 YEARS OLD)
PRIEST LEVEL: 9
HP: 31 MP: 35
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT...
MUNCH
...BUT...
WALKING AROUND POINTLESSLY AND DEFEATING WEAK ENEMIES...
WANDER
WANDER
...JUST SO I CAN LEVEL UP IS A HUGE PAIN IN THE BUTT!
WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

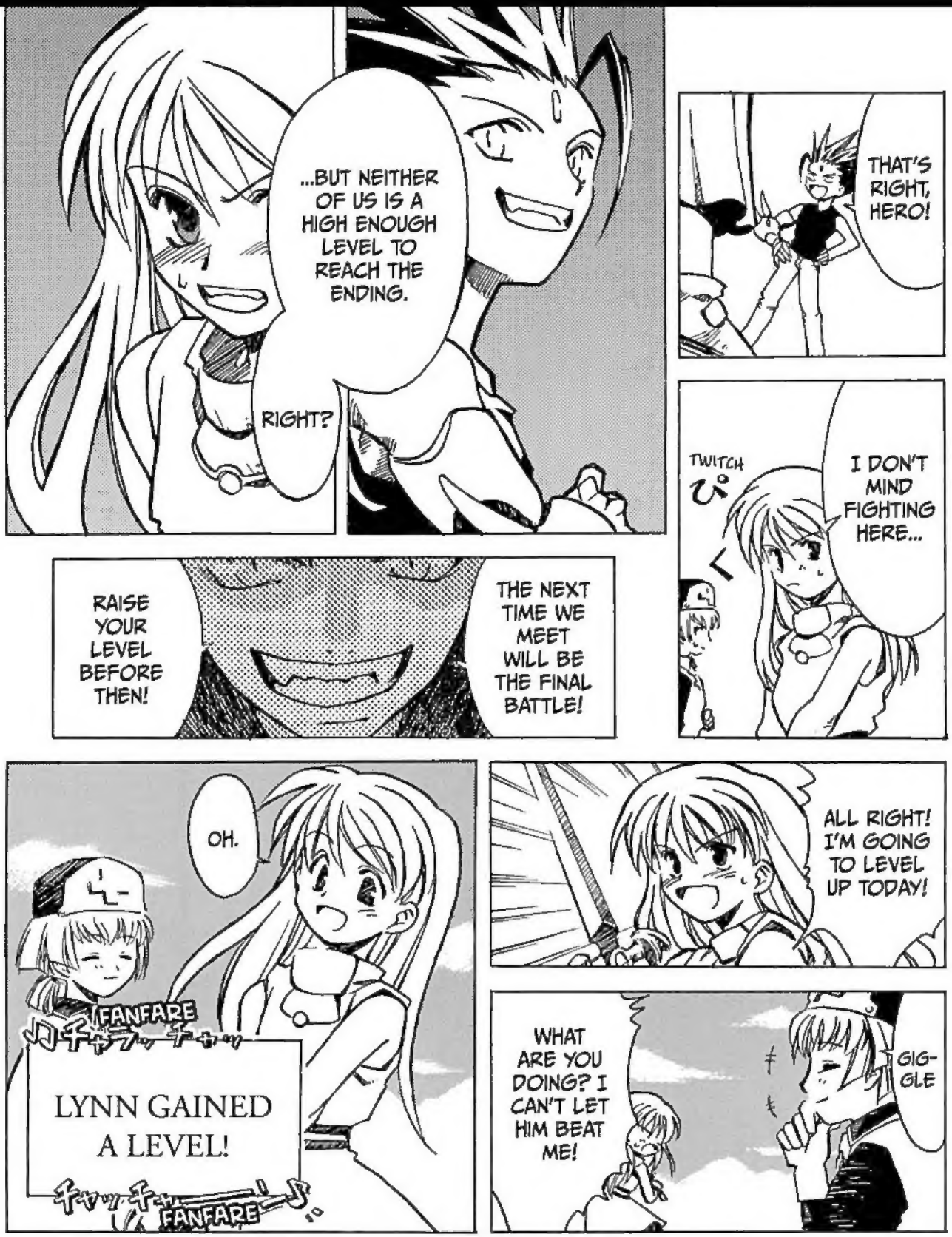
....
I'M OPPOSED TO A SOCIETY THAT EMPHASIZES LEVELS!
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH BASING PEOPLES' VALUE ON THEIR LEVEL.
BUT IT DOES!
THAT PLACE DOESN'T EXIST.
LYNN.
I WONDER IF THERE'S SOMEPLACE I CAN GET A BUNCH OF EXPERIENCE POINTS...
....
WOULD YOU LIKE TO CHECK IT OUT?
THERE ARE RELATIVELY WEAK MONSTERS WHO GIVE A LOT OF EXPERIENCE IN THE DUNGEON UP AHEAD.
ANYWAY...
...THAT'S HOW WE GOT HERE...
WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

YOU'RE RIGHT.
SLASH
SPLURCH
...THIS DUNGEON IS FULL OF WEAK MONSTERS.
YEAH, BUT...
STOMP
じだんだ
STOMP
じだんだ
I WANT MORE EXPERI-ENCE!
THANKS.
YOU'RE INJURED HERE!
I KNOW, BUT...
I THINK THIS DUNGEON IS JUST RIGHT FOR US.
NOW, NOW.
I'LL KILL HIM!
THAT GUY IN THE CAPE LIED TO US!
EXPERI-ENCE POINTS!
BANG!
THIS DOOR LOOKS SERIOUS.
THIS IS...
CLENCH
THERE MUST BE SOME ENEMIES IN HERE!
BOOM
LET'S GO DEEP-ER.

WELCOME. I AM GORM, THE DEMON KING. I RULE THIS PLACE.
MY, MY. WHAT CUTE GUESTS.
BOOM
DIZZY
YOU WILL DIE!
I'M SORRY, BUT...
...YOU MUST BE PUNISHED FOR YOUR MISCHIEF.
THE DEMON KING? HE'S THE FINAL BOSS?

ENA'S HEALING SPELL CAN'T KEEP UP.
I WASN'T EXPECTING A FINAL BOSS HERE.
I SHOULD'VE LEVELED UP SOME MORE.
IT'S NO USE. WE CAN'T WIN.
HOLD UP.
DIE!
IT'S TIME TO FINISH THIS.

SLASH
DIE, FALSE DEMON KING!
RUSTLE
THANKS FOR TAKING OUT THE WEAK ONES, MISS!
IM-POS-SI-BLE ...
WHOOSH
YOU ...
HISS
YOU'RE NOT NEARLY STRONG ENOUGH TO TAKE MY PLACE AS THE DEMON KING!
THE GUY IN THE CAPE WAS THE DEMON KING?
THE REAL ONE?
DEATH
(10 years old)
Demon King Level: 12
HP: 3021 MP: 211


...BUT NEITHER OF US IS A HIGH ENOUGH LEVEL TO REACH THE ENDING.
RIGHT?
THAT'S RIGHT, HERO!
TWITCH
I DON'T MIND FIGHTING HERE...
RAISE YOUR LEVEL BEFORE THEN!
THE NEXT TIME WE MEET WILL BE THE FINAL BATTLE!
OH.
FANFARE
LYNN GAINED A LEVEL!
FANFARE
ALL RIGHT! I'M GOING TO LEVEL UP TODAY!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? I CAN'T LET HIM BEAT ME!
GIG-GLE

LEVEL HERO! END

MAOYU : Archenemy and Hero
"Become mine, Hero" "I refuse!"
Volume 12

KADOKAWA MANGA

Art by
Akira Ishida

Original Work by
Mamare Touno

Character Design by
Keinojou Mizutama and toi8

MAOYU MAOU YUUSHA
"KONO WARENO MONOTONARE, YUUSHAYO" "KOTOWARU!"
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KADOKAWA CORPORATION
2-13-3 Fujimi Chiyoda-ku Tokyo, 102-8177 JAPAN

Translation/Wowmax Media! LLC
Lettering and Design/Keiran O'Leary
Editor/Eric Searleman